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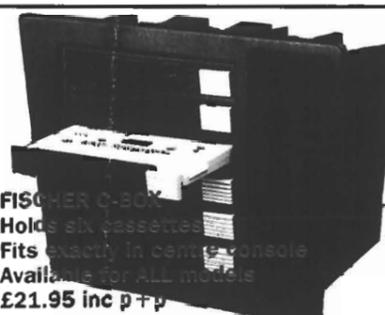
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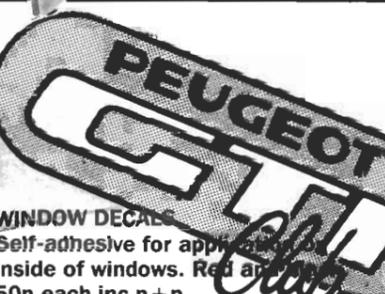
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For further product information for Peugeot and other makes, please write, or telephone (0264) 88568.

APOLOGY
 Due to the distinct lack of both time to put the article together AND the lack of space in this issue, the promised article on 'Starting in Autotests' has had to be held over until the very near future. Forgive me but rely on me to get it sorted very soon. MB

FOR SALE
 Due to arrival of new car:
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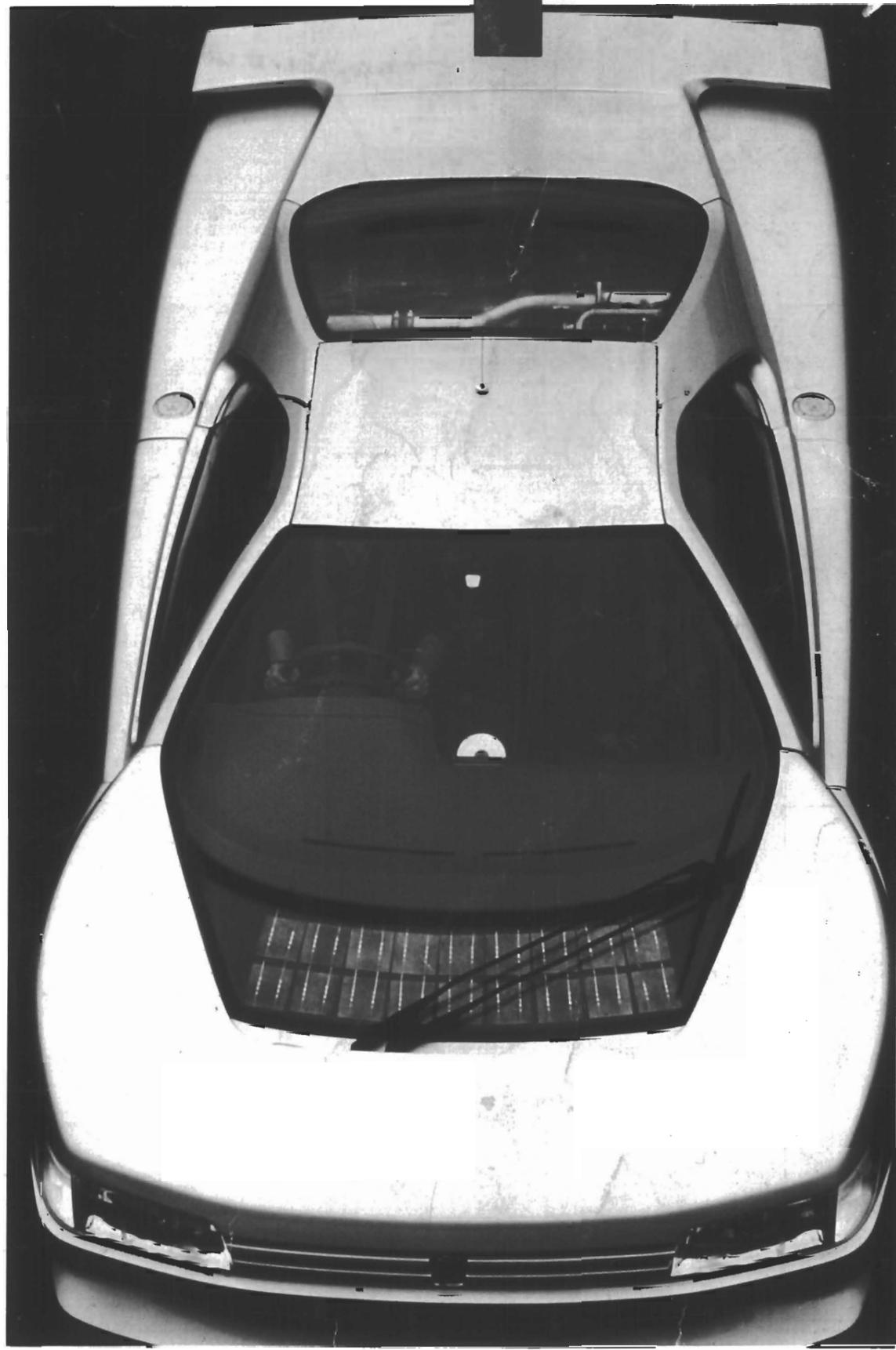
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 1989 NATIONAL CONVENTION
 N.E.C. BIRMINGHAM
 SEPTEMBER 24TH

TORQUE



PEUGEOT OWNERS CLUB SPRING 1989

GUTMANN 205i-16v Driving Impressions
 FAST FORWARD TO GROUP C RALLY CLUB PROGRESS

AROUND & ABOUT

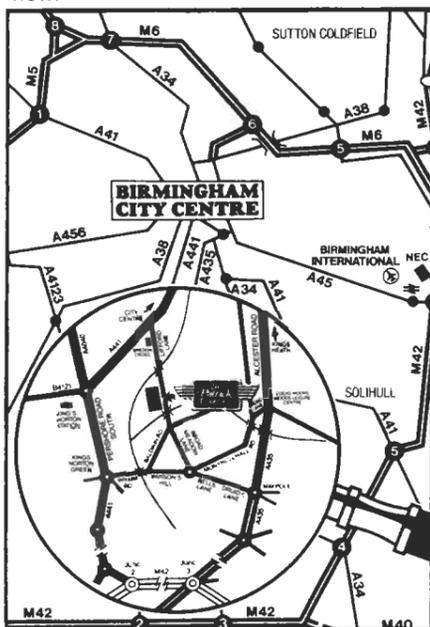
AVON TYRES VISIT

It has been proposed that we arrange a visit to Avon Tyres at Melksham in Wiltshire. A group of at least twenty would be needed and the visit would have to be on a weekday. It is intended that we have a guided tour of the factory and see production of the necessary rubber goods taking place and it may also be possible to tie this in with a visit to the Mark Cole racing School. If anyone is interested, please contact Penny Curtis for further information.

PATRICK COLLECTION VISIT

The Patrick Collection Motor Museum is situated just South of Birmingham at Kings Norton; easily accessible from the M5, M6 and the M42. It is famous for its large collection of modern classics - AM Zagato; Porsche 959, Ferrari F40, Peugeot 205 T16, etc. among a wide range of exhibits from the past. If you are interested in any particular car, do let Penny know and you never know what she can arrange!

Sunday 14th May at 11:00 am. £10 per person and this includes lunch. Members' guests are also welcome - the more the merrier! Send your cash/cheque/PO/share certificates to Penny Curtis NOW.



SKI TRIP

As you may have guessed from January's weather reports, there was NO SNOW at all in Scotland and our expected Ski-ing Weekend turned into an 'other activities' weekend. The time certainly wasn't wasted and, for some, it was better than if snow had been available!

The 'GTi Group' comprised Penny, Paul and Elliott Curtis; Jason Adams; David Yu; Julie Goodwin and her parents with their three beautiful collie dogs. Julkie had been worried about having the dogs along and in the hotel but, on arrival, they found that 300 huskies and their owners had taken over practically all of the hotel for their annual Grand Prix Sled Pull.

We couldn't have asked for better weather - for no ski-ing - sunshine, clear skies and winter light that bathed the Highlands in a most flattering way. Not that Dave, Jason and Paul drove slow enough to appreciate the views but they certainly appreciated

the empty, winding roads, putting their Mark Cole training into practice. As a passenger, I was both terrified and exhilarated. Son Elliott was totally unimpressed, sleeping peacefully through it all.

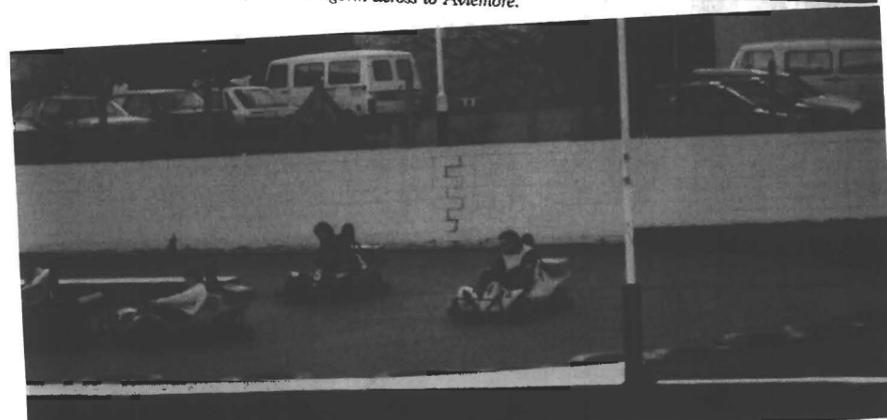
The hotel was excellent; five star facilities included a swimming pool, a jacuzzi and, best of all, wonderful food - both in quality and quantity. Evening entertainment was all laid on; see adjacent photograph of Jason helping the Folk Band out. He'll never forgive me for volunteering him!

The weekend was enjoyed so much that, next year, the 'activities weekend' will be in addition to any ski-ing that, we hope, will take place. This will mean that, for those like me who don't want to risk life and limb on the slippery slopes, we can enjoy a fun break in the company of like-minded loonies!

Penny Curtis.



Picture postcard time! The view from Cairngorm across to Aviemore.



Karting at the snow-free Aviemore. M+S tyres were not required!



And - starring Jason on the 'lagerphone'!

TORQUE

PEUGEOT OWNERS CLUB

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LOCAL GROUPS 2

A new Group, East Midlands, has crept in since last time but brain-death keeps the West Country and Wales from making a showing. Go for it, mun/zor! (Ethnic minorities represented will comprehend!)

NEWS FLASH 4

Fresh from the pages of Funday Spurt, more items of gripping curiosity and wonder ... but in this case, it's all true! Elvis Presley is alive and well - and drives about in a 205 Diesel!

READERS' LETTERS 5

Shall have to get a bigger letterbox fitted to the Editorial front door! Keep 'em coming and we may qualify for a bigger Postman!

ROAD TEST 6

David Yu gets to grips with a Gutmann 16v this time - more to come from the Yu Department in future issues. Meantime, drool over THIS one!

PEUGEOT SPORT 8

LOTS to tell - LOTS been happening. Racing and rallying, it all takes your breath away!

AROUND AND ABOUT 11

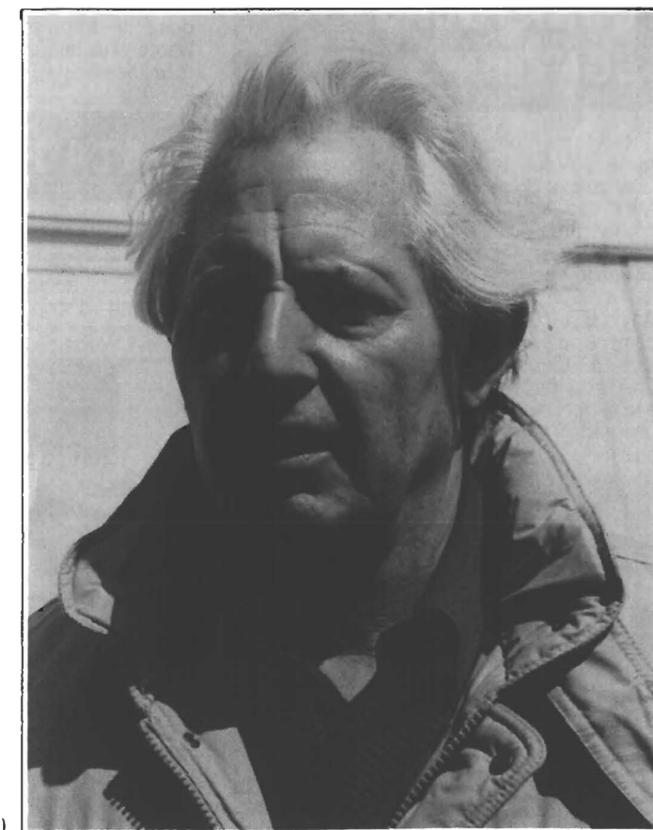
Been busy again, haven't you? (Well, except in Wales and the West!)

TORQUE TALK

OK - so Torque is late. It's MY fault and no-one else's. The unfortunate need to earn a living and to pay the mortgage has resulted in any spare time being at a premium over the last two months! Many thanks for your patience and to all those who have contributed articles for this issue.

The thanks are specially extended to David Yu who has travelled far and wide to investigate the 'tuned GTi' business. The first of his reports occupies the centre pages. I have a suspicion that his eagerness to WRITE about 'hot' cars could well have something to do with his desire to DRIVE them! - and who can blame him when he's not getting paid for his journalistic efforts!

Mike Bell



The new Peugeot GTi Club President ... Des O'Dell.

(Photo: Colin Taylor Productions)



1989 PRICES

January saw all the major manufacturers raise their new car prices and the new Peugeot Price List now reads like this:

205GTi 1.6 £9350
205GTi 1.9 £10765
205CTi 1.6 £11760

309GTi 3dr £10995
309GTi 5dr £11245

405 Mi-16 £15895

M16's IN STOCK

Production of the Mi 16 is now going strong and some of the larger dealers have cars in stock. So, those of you wanting to 'trade up' should be able to shop around for the best deal ... and maybe let us all know your best result?

QUANTOCKS CONTOURS

The Rotary Club of the Quantocks (sounds quite painful to me!) are organising a Concours d'Elegance and Parade between Minehead and Watchet on Sunday September 3rd - the ideal chance for some Peugeot GTi Club exposure in the West Country??

Any GTi Club member interested in competing - either as an individual or as part of a GTi Club Team - should contact Penny Curtis for further details. As with any other event promoted by the Rotary Club, proceeds from the day will be going to local charities.



NEW RAPPORT FROM PEUGEOT



Recent buyers of new Peugeot cars will have already received their first issue of the new - and very high quality - magazine ... 'Rapport' Published four times a year, it will be mailed direct to all new Peugeot owners for a period of two years.

Rapport will play a major role in the Customer Communications area of Peugeot's marketing strategy, reflecting both the quality of the Company's product and the success it is enjoying.

Peter Williams, Marketing Director Peugeot Talbot, says, "The main task of this magazine is to enhance brand loyalty. It is one part of an on-going communication programme which aims to establish a sense of 'family' belonging and which reflects the aspirations and interests of the Peugeot owner".

The content of 'Rapport' is everything a magazine should be, a wide mix of features with a well thought out balance between relevant corporate articles and general 'human-interest' features. Printed on very high quality art paper, perfect-bound into laminated outer covers and with full colour on 99% of the first issue's 52 pages, it is quite impressive ... almost worth buying a new Peugeot for!

NEW OWNERS' CLUB IN GERMANY

Peugeot enthusiasts in Germany now have a new Club to cater for them and their favourite cars. The 'LOWEN CLUB' - even basic linguists will work out that this translates as 'Lion Club' - has been in existence since January and already has several hundred members, including a considerable proportion of GTi owners.

Founded by Rainer Engler, the Club is also producing its own magazine, aptly titled 'Lowen Magazin' and, from the dummy issue received, it would appear to be having loads spent on it - art paper throughout, more pages than we are now used to and, with the extra space, much more 'designer' in format. Although all in mono on the inside, quite an impressive device and we shall watch with interest, maybe nicking some of their ideas!

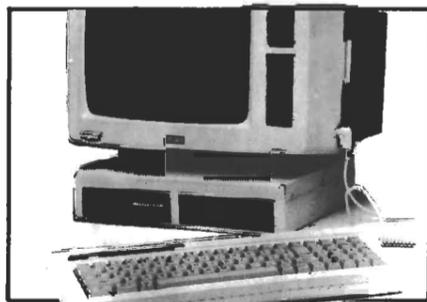


Anyone interested in more information can either write direct to Graham Mitchell at GM Design (address elsewhere in this issue) or direct to the Lowen Club at

RIEGLER STRASSE 18, D-7835 TENINGEN, DEUTSCHLAND.

DATA PROTECTION

The Club keeps the records of its members on a computer disc, principally for the purpose of administering the membership fees and distributing paperwork to the membership.



Without going into the legal technicalities of the situation, the Club is obliged to register under the Data Protection Act 1984 as a 'Data User'. The fee for such registration is £40 and the procedure itself is quite complicated. However, under the terms of the Act, there is an exemption from

registration in favour of unincorporated members' clubs - a category into which the Peugeot GTi Club falls.

The Club can take advantage of this exemption only if there are no objections to non-registration raised by the membership. If you object to the proposed NON-registration, the Club can take one of two available courses of action; store the relevant information manually or register.

Even if the Club does not register, it can still only disclose the information it holds about the membership in very limited circumstances and, essentially, only when authorised by the individual or individuals concerned.

In view of the above, the Club now requires your consent to continue to hold the information relating to all members on the computer disc WITHOUT registering as a Data User under the terms of the Act. If you object, please do so, in writing, to the Club Secretary within one month of the publication date of this issue of Torque.



Chris Birkbeck/Mike Kidd, 1600 205GTi. (Photo: GTP)



Simon Davison/Steve Bond in the 1300cc 205 Rallye. (Photo: GTP)

PEUGEOT RALLY CHALLENGE ROUND ONE

EVENT ONE: The 'all-action' Rally Club got off to a well-supported but non-competitive start on January 28th when 125 members and friends visited the Peugeot Sport Competition Department at Coventry. The purpose of the day was to enable members to learn all aspects of rally car preparation, on-event servicing and event administration from Peugeot Sport personnel.

Several demonstrations were held throughout the day and included engine building, suspension preparation and all other aspects of preparing a Group N rally car.

EVENT TWO: Only a few days after Event One, over 40 members took advantage of the opportunity of some forest driving training when Peugeot took over Jan Churchill's Welsh Forest Rally School for three days. The stage, in the very heart of mid-Wales rally territory, is used by top manufacturers' teams for testing and, as well as Chris Birkbeck, Simon Davison and Warren Hunt being there, new Peugeot star Hakan Erikson was present with a Group A 309GTi.

The highlight for Club members was a lap of the stage sitting in with Hakan. The technique consists of the right foot being firmly planted to the floor and the left foot being used on the brake to set up the car for the corners. All this with clutchless gear-changes and the steering wheel only being used when all else fails! His incredible car control only serves to heighten one's awareness of one's own inadequacies!

EVENT THREE: The first competitive event of the GTi Rally Club Rally Challenge was the John Price Longleat Stages where over 30 GTi's joined 100 other competitors for some fun in the Safari Park.

Fortunately, the (other) lions were secure behind bars as these 'Lions' slithered and slid around the narrow tarmac roads, more often than not making unscheduled deviations from the intended route by taking to the grass! - Lion droppings being an additional hazard!

One of the top Peugeot contenders, Kevin Furber, did his championship hopes a power of no good when he slid off on the first stage and, before he could get back on and away, it was rammed in the side by another errant competitor!

Your GTi Club was represented by Mike Bell and Kevin Pye in their 1.9 205GTi who, after an embarrassingly slow start, eventually finished tenth Peugeot. When asked the reason behind his early caution, Mike put it down to driver-malfunction and some concern about the paint-job getting scratched!

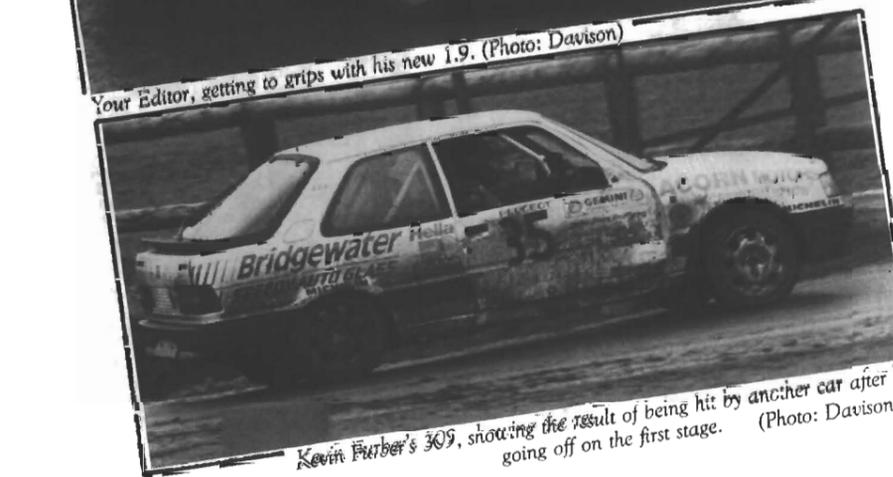
One or two other GTi Club members were there, seen marshalling or taking photos. If YOU were - or will be - involved in any way, please let us know. At the very least, you deserve a mention.



Paul Frankland, winner of the first round, in his 205GTi 1.9 (Photo: Davison)



Your Editor, getting to grips with his new 1.9. (Photo: Davison)



Kevin Furber's 309, showing the result of being hit by another car after going off on the first stage. (Photo: Davison)



GROUP C PROGRAMME

Peugeot Sport will be competing in the Sports Prototype World Championship in 1991. Jean Baillot, President of Automobiles Peugeot, revealed this decision towards the end of last year, finally ending speculation regarding the direction that their motor sport involvement would take.

The project is in its very early stages with only the basic design concepts set out. It is known that the sportscar will be powered by a new 3.5 litre atmospheric engine to be designed by Peugeot. Whether this will have eight, ten or twelve cylinders is not yet decided but four-wheel steering is being considered. Perhaps surprisingly, the car will NOT be based on the Oxia which was displayed at the recent Motor Show.

The personnel involved in the project all have racing as well as rally experience, several of them having joined Peugeot from their French rivals at Renault when they withdrew from racing. Gerard Weltier, Peugeot's head of styling, is a member of the team and has been connected with the WM-Peugeot sportscar team which raced at Le Mans; that car raced at Le Mans and achieved a record speed of 400 kph on the Mulsanne Straight in the 1988 event.

The Le Mans 24 Hour race is obviously the main attraction in the proposed 12-race

1989 COMPETITION PROGRAMME

The most exciting and comprehensive motor-sport programme for many years is announced by Peugeot for 1989. Included in the calendar is an attack on three classes of the Shell Oils BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP, a return to the race tracks for the Esso BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP, involvement in the BRITISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP and a continuing commitment to the development to the development of young British driving talent through the hugely successful PEUGEOT GTI RALLY CLUB.

Des O'Dell, Motorsport Director, says "We've built a completely new team for this year, with the emphasis on youth and training; there are new names, new cars and plenty of opportunities for the new talent to get noticed. I think that it's the most exciting programme from the team for a long time."

Rally Programme:

Three cars will be entered in the three engine capacity classes in the Shell Oils British Championship; all prepared initially at Coventry and to full group A spec.

Hakan (pronounced 'Hawken') Eriksson, the younger brother of World Championship star, Kenneth Eriksson, will drive a 309GTi on the Cartel. Des O'Dell was instantly impressed with Hakan's abilities when he saw him in action on the Swedish rally this year and reports that Hakan will be involved in assisting with the training of the members of the Peugeot GTI Rally Club. "Perhaps some of the Scandinavian magic can rub off!", says Des.

One of the rising stars of British rallying, Chris Birkbeck from Cleveland, will be running a 1600 205GTi and partnered by Mike Kidd, a former road rally Champion who has made the transition to stage rallying with some ease. Another driver from the North East is Simon Davison. Simon will be teamed up with Steve Bond and they will be campaigning one of the rare (in UK) 1300cc 205 Rallye cars.

Championship, especially for the French company. It is intended to promote the whole range of Peugeot cars through this programme, rather than specific products as has been the case previously when the 205 and 405 rally and 'raid' cars were made the centre of attraction.

The project is a long term one, the car being developed this year and testing due to commence in early 1990. It is also intended to compete in certain events during that year, leading to a complete season in 1991. It is also possible that the engine could be supplied to

Race Programme:

Peugeot won the British Touring Car Championship six times in the 1970's and, for the return this year, a 309GTi will be driven by Mike Jordan from Sutton Coldfield. After starting in Formula Ford and achieving a lot of success during 1984 and 1985, Mike then spent a couple of years as an instructor at the Cadwell Park Racing School before taking up the offer of a Porsche on the last race of the 1986 Porsche Championship. He won that race outright and his future was thus settled. The 1987 Porsche Championship resulted in a series win for Mike, from nine wins and three second places in the 12-event season.

"We have been out of top level saloon racing for several years", says Des O'Dell, "so this will be a learning year for both us and Mike. We will have to be realistic but, even, so, it's great to be back in the British Touring Car series."

Rallycross Programme:

Works support and technical advice will be enjoyed by John Milner who has earned some support after two wins and a fifth overall in the 1988 season in Formula C of the British Rallycross Championship. In addition to the British series, 20-year old John will also compete in the Motaquip Rallycross Grand Prix, where he reached the finals last year. John will also be trying a couple of selected club-level stage rallies during the year.

Other Events:

The Paris-Algiers-Dakar couldn't be left out of the Peugeot programme for 1989 and Christmas Day will see yet another attack by the most successful Paris-Dakar team.

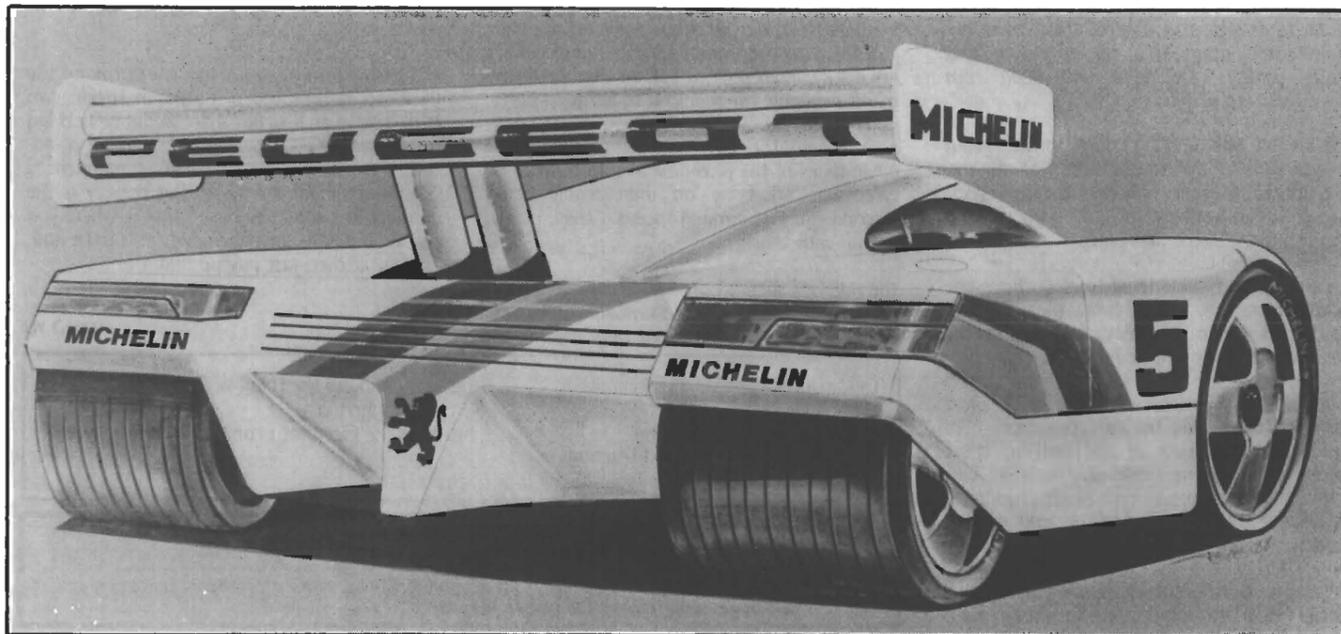
A decision on whether to take part in the Pikes Peak Hillclimb in July will be taken very shortly. Success on this dirt road provides immense publicity value and must be a very tempting exercise to repeat.

The Spanish Baja in July and the Pharaohs Rally in October are also on the list.

other teams for use in Formula 1 but the main emphasis remains on the production of the Sports Prototype car. It will have a strong Peugeot identity and will, hopefully, be proving itself against the other major manufacturers teams of Porsche, Jaguar and Mercedes.

So, start making your plans for a visit to France in June 1991 to cheer on the Peugeots at Le Mans!

Philip Tarttelin



Artist's impressions of the Group C Sports Prototype

Readers' Letters

SPOT CHECK

I was recently 'pulled over' by our local Constabulary for a spot check - lights, tyres, road tax, etc and you can imagine my surprise when I was informed that my 205GTi was illegal.

The facts of the matter are that the auxiliary driving lights, fitted as standard on GTi's, are illegal in this country since all lights, except those to be used in conditions of fog or falling snow, are to be at least 24 inches from the road surface.

I was told, by the Police, to have my lights re-wired so that they would only come on when fog lights were on and NOT on with main beam.

There are three reasons for this letter:

A: To clarify this point of law for myself and other Club members.

B: To ask Peugeot if they will compensate me for having to comply with the law.

C: To inform all other GTi owners so that this experience need not happen to them.

I await your reply.

M. Coid

Frizington, Cumbria.

I suggest that you inform your local Constabulary to check their facts! Apparently, the old 24 inches legislation was dropped in 1984, thus allowing Peugeot to market the GTi with its low-set driving lamps. Although not in possession of the full facts, I believe that it has something to do with the British legislation falling into line with the rest of the E.E.C. MB

GEAR STICK

My 1985 'C-reg' 1.6 205GTi, with 26,000 miles on the clock, has developed two apparently minor problems which I wondered if you could advise me on.

1: The gear-shift is 'notchy' and quite obstructive AFTER warming-up and in town driving. Can this be cured?

2: The clutch operation has become heavy. The garage says that this can happen, even after 10,000 miles, and nothing short of a new clutch will resolve it. As it still works well, this seems a drastic step to take. Is there no other way?

Len Perry

Bexhill-on-Sea.

Your gear shift problems could be due to some part of the external linkage - which runs very close to the exhaust - starting to seize or the oil level in the gearbox is too low.

As far as the clutch is concerned, the most common cause of 'heaviness' is the clutch CABLE, which can wear internally. Replacement of this item is FAR cheaper than fitting a new clutch! MB.

GET THE LEAD OUT!

I have a C-reg 1.6 GTi and have been wondering about a conversion to unleaded petrol. I gather that there is likely to be some drop in performance but nobody seems to know by how much. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Ken Cheung

London.

Opinions on this matter vary so much that I can only suggest that you have the ignition timing adjusted - a very simple mod - as recommended by Peugeot, fill up with unleaded and see what happens. In normal, you are quite likely to notice no difference!

TICK-TOCK ALARM

Having recently purchased my new GTi, moving up from a 1.6 to a 1.9, I find a similar annoyance on the new engine to that experienced with the old. There is a ticking noise emanating from the cam housing which comes and goes but increases after a good run.

Apparently, on the older 1.6 engines, this was because the cam cover didn't have a breather pipe - or so I was told by the local Peugeot Dealer. Thus, with the newer 1.6 and 1.9 engines having a breather arrangement, the noise shouldn't appear.

If anything, the noise is greater on the new 1.9 and I mentioned it to the Dealer on the 1500-mile Service. They reported that they couldn't find any noise (Obviously didn't take it for a test run?) I feel that the engine isn't breathing properly and possibly causing a pressure build-up, making the shims rattle or perhaps there just isn't enough oil pressure to the cam.

Obviously, as the car is still under warranty, I am - at present - not unduly worried. It is annoying, however, and I wonder whether you or any reader can shed some light on the problem.

Keep up the good work.

Paul Hancock

Stockport.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to accurately diagnose engine noises by post but, we'll give it a try. Ticking noises CAN come from the injectors on GTi engines, or even from the valve gear. 1.9 models do seem to be noisier than their smaller brothers and I do know that the oil feed to the camshaft has caused a few problems - but due to TOO MUCH oil pressure rather than not enough. Your Peugeot Dealer should have information about this. MB.

TYRE OPTIONS 1

I own a Peugeot 309GTi which has covered nearly 19,000 miles and the front tyres will need renewing soon. Do you, or perhaps any other Club member, have any experience of running this vehicle on any other tyre other than the Michelin? Perhaps Pirelli or Bridgestone if they are available in the required size.

I find this car to be very prone to 'sliding' in damp conditions, a problem that I had with an MG Maestro 2.0 litre and that car was very much improved by fitting Pirelli P600s. Another probable answer may be not to drive so fast!! Hope you can help. Kindest regards.

John Raby

Brigg, South Humberside.

It is generally acknowledged that Michelin MXVs are manufactured using a harder compound rubber than some other tyres. Pirelli P600s, as fitted to a percentage of new GTIs, have a better reputation for wet road adhesion. As to other makes of tyre, Mark Cole uses BF Goodrich on his Race School cars (see p11 of the December issue). It must be remembered that all tyres are a compromise between grip and tyre life. A softer compound rubber will give better adhesion in both wet and dry conditions but will obviously wear faster ... swings and roundabouts. Also see below. MB.

TYRE OPTIONS 2

In the December issue, in the article about Mark Cole Racing, it was mentioned that he uses BF Goodrich Comp TA tyres in a 195/50-VR15 size on the standard 6J x 15" alloy rim. Please correct me if I am wrong but wouldn't these tyres give an

overall lowering of the gearing with the normally 55 series being changed to a 50 series?

Because the 195 section is wider, giving more grip, is it not possible to retain the 55 series, thus not affecting the gearing? Would you know whether there is a 195/55 VR15 tyre on the market and at what price?

Additionally, would any adjustments be required to fit this type of tyre as clearance may be a problem.

I hope you can assist me with this enquiry and also to pass on to other members my recommendation for the 'Wheel Clean Discs' as marketed by Carflow. These simple devices, once fitted, prevent the high majority of the front wheel brake dust from affecting the appearance of the alloy wheels and does not affect braking performance.

Sean Childs

RAF Gutersloh, Germany.

Thanks for the tip about the Wheel Clean Discs! Moving on to the tyre enquiry ...

The 150 or 155 included in the tyre size is, in fact, the height of the tyre wall expressed as a PERCENTAGE of the tyre width. Thus, the height of the tyre wall of a standard 1.9 GTi tyre (185/55 HR15) is 55% of 185mm = 101.75mm. If the other tyre size options are calculated in the same way, it can be seen that gearing WILL be affected to a degree as the tyre wall height will affect the rolling circumference and the revolutions per mile of the tyre. As a comparison, the 195/50 VR15 works out to a tyre wall height of 97.5mm - therefore lowering the gearing marginally - whereas a 195/55 tyre wall height comes out as 107.25mm, raising the gearing over standard. It is merely a question of personal choice; the higher gearing will give you better fuel consumption for your autobahn cruising but marginally slower acceleration. The converse applies with the lower gearing if using the 195/55 size.

As far as tyre clearance is concerned, anything larger than the standard tyre overall diameter is likely to cause problems and, rather than the 195/55, I would recommend the 195/50 from the clearance aspect. Incidentally, all tyre manufacturers publish the dimensions of their products: circumference, revs per mile, etc, and this information should be easily available from tyre dealers. MB.

BRAKE CLONK?

I was interested to read the letter concerning the brake 'clonking' problem of the 1.6's front brakes. I, too, experienced this in a 1988 car and also had some 'grating' at low speeds. After stripping the brakes, I have come to the conclusion that the problem lies in the pads fitted as standard. They appear to 'stick' to the disc when hot - the problem not occurring when the brakes are cold. Also, cleaning off the faces of the pads effected a cure for a short while. A change to another make of pad, Mintex, etc, will hopefully cure it altogether. A good tip if you experience the engine stalling is to change the plugs for NGK BCP6ES - at least, for the 1.6 engine, this simple modification worked wonders in my case.

Apart from these little annoyances, the car has been first class and a joy to drive.

RW Brown

Edinburgh.

more

DIGITAL DISPLAY

In the June edition of Torque, you asked for interesting number plates. Please see the photograph of my silver 205GTi 1.6 which, surely, must be displaying the lowest number, if not the most interesting!

For the uninitiated, Guernsey car registrations contain no letters and, to my knowledge, 2051 is on a white 1.9, 1205 on a white Cabriolet and 20519 has recently been seen on a red 1.9! The possibilities are endless.

Ms Edwina O'Sullivan

St Saviours, Guernsey.



DISILLUSIONED

In November of last year, I took possession of the greatly acclaimed 1.9 205GTi. Here I sit, eight weeks later, a slightly disillusioned man.

As you know, when buying any car in the sporting class, it's performance figures are always first and foremost in the prospective buyer's mind. During the first six weeks of ownership, I was getting quite used to the new levels of style and luxury that the GTi had to offer ... not to mention the one hundred and thirty horsepower to boot!

Ten days ago, just before it's first free service, I was travelling along our local stretch of motorway when I was 'challenged' by a young man out of my hometown in his STANDARD XR3i. To cut a long story even shorter, I couldn't do a thing with him. I only JUST managed to pass him and, flat out was struggling at 120mph.

I became worried because the engine was running as smooth as a baby's bottle but the acceleration was only on a par with the Ford. At the free service, I told the dealer about this and he looked at me in scorn! He checked out the car for power and test drove it, finding it faultless.

Please, please, please ... tell me that I can expect better as time goes on or would I be better off trading my otherwise fabulous GTi for a 1.6 version or - as a last resort - for an XR3i?

Yours desperately,

Name and address withheld.

Well! What can I say? To answer the last paragraph first: At 1700 miles, your GTi is not yet fully run-in. MY 1.9 now has 6000 on the mileage recorder and is STARTING to fly. When I first drove it, I was disappointed too, as it didn't feel as lively as my previous 1600s. Now, there is no comparison!

Don't forget that the odd second or two difference published as 0-60 times is NOT going to show up as an almighty difference on the road. personally, I feel that the strength of the 1.9 GTi is its superb torque spread and flexibility, allowing fast cross-country journeys without recourse to screaming through the gears all the time. As the racing XR3i's, let 'em go! The joy of driving a superior car is that you don't have to prove anything! MB.

Driving Impressions: Gutmann 205i 16v



Welcome to the first of a 'Limited Edition' series of test drives of some of the various Peugeot GTi conversions available. Yeah, I know, I know; you've already read 'Performance Car', 'Autocar & Motor', 'Performance Tuning', 'Fast Car', 'Flipping Amazingly Quick Motor' AND 'Sociopathic Drivers' Weekly' and their full road test reports on the Gutmann 205 16-valve, so why bother doing another one for Torque?

Well - firstly, none of the writers of the aforementioned reports drives a standard 205 1.9 as their everyday transport and, in all likelihood, have not driven one since the launch in '86, if at all. Secondly, all those tests tended to concentrate too much on the facts and figures in my opinion and only a few lines were devoted to how the car actually felt to drive, especially in relation to the standard article. Thirdly, I wanted to have a go in one!

I met Graham Mitchell, sole UK Gutmann importer, and his 'Q-car' steed, in a rural pub car park, just off the M4 in Wiltshire. First visual impressions were of how superb, and massive, those 195/50 Bridgestone RE71's looked on their 7" intra rims; their width cunningly emphasised by the total absence of any bodykit extended wheel arches! Having said that, the car did have the optional, and sinister-looking, black-tinted rear lights and the 'hatch panel' ... a £180 option. The discreet 'Gutmann 16v' badging and the large diameter, stainless steel, Sebring oval, tail pipe - linked to a truly dustbin-sized rear silencer box - should ensure lesser GTi owner's salivation (mouth-watering!) while the whole package would hardly rate a second glance from The Old Bill ... no offence, Tony!

After a pleasant light lunch and a chat (when it was revealed that Graham used to import Alpina parts well before Frank Sytner did), the big cat took to the roads of the Wiltshire countryside with Graham at the wheel.

Impressions from the passenger seat were NOT of instant snatches of spine-crushing

acceleration but of an insistent, ever-increasing push in the back that seemed to last forever - and in any gear. I have to confess that it did take some self-control in order to suppress a rather un-manly 'squeak' from this side of the car as we entered bends at an indicated 90 mph AND, occasionally, on a feathered throttle or even - GASP! - with a touch on the brakes! Now, there cannot be too many surviving pilots of 205GTi's who make such a habit of these cornering techniques ... Louise excepted, of course ... as the tail would normally bite back, taking control away from the driver. But, not in THIS Lion! The combination of lowered Gutmann springs, tweaked standard-fit dampers, brake bias to the front - and those incerdible tyres - meant that the blacked-out tail stayed behind the nose with no sign of protest.

"Boring!", I imagine some of you saying, "We LIKE the way the standard car oversteers on command!" Well, so do I, but this baby enters corners, exits them and reaches the next one SO much faster that I seriously doubt that anybody would prefer the 'normal' feel of the rear wheels edging their way out of line, especially since the wheelbase isn't a millimetre longer and there ain't an extra gramme of metal protecting you ...

After forty minutes of terrifying the locals, I had remained totally UN-terrified. (Fib!) Then, the moment of truth arrived ... pulling over on a narrow and muddy lane, it was my turn! Now I started to REALLY get worried! A £17-grand 205, third party insurance, the owner sitting just inches away ...

After a gentle start, familiarising myself with the feel of the car and noticing Graham gradually relaxing - slightly - I started to push the right foot a little further. The first noticeable effect was how instantly the engine responded, no matter how low down the rev range, with a fabulous twin-cam snarl coming back from the bonnet. In fact, inside the car, the exhaust was surprisingly subdued compared to the fierce but very pleasant under-bonnet sound.



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Reinforcing my earlier passenger-seat feeling, the car was found to pull from 2000 rpm up to 7200 rpm with no sign of easing off. Unlike the standard car, the speed at which the tach needle sweeps it's arc around the dial, is as quick in third and fourth gears as it is in the lower gears!

The engine feels to have all the flexibility of the standard 1.9 up to 4500 rpm, at which point, it's power curve seems to double the 'angle of attack' on the bhp graph, straight up to the 7200 red-line where the rev-limiter stops the over-eager from going OTT. All this isn't entirely due to the four valves per cylinder as the gearbox features the close-ratio gearing of the 405 Mi-16 as well as a lowered Final Drive; the whole combination suiting the power and torque peaks - at 6500 and 5000 rpm respectively - to perfection.

Despite 164 bhp and 133 lb/ft torque going through wide rubber, torque-steer was remarkably noticeable by it's absence and all credit must go to Peugeot here, for getting the steering geometry right in the first place.

The wide, square-shouldered tyres do have one disadvantage; they tend to follow the camber of the road slightly and a gentle restraint on the steering wheel was required at all times.

I was initially surprised with how much effort was required to haul the car down from high speed. With the bulk of the braking effort concentrated on the front wheels, there was terrific 'feel' on the pedal and, to stop harder, it was only necessary to push on the pedal harder; the actual pedal movement being quite small.

The German-made sports clutch was slightly heavier than standard, with a fairly sharp

'clamping-point', but this only encouraged correctly co-ordinated gear-changes.

The turn-in was stunningly sharp and precise with absolutely no body-roll discernable. The level of lateral grip was simply staggering, way beyond those of the standard equipment tyres and the way that some mid-corner patches of slimy mud were ignored seemed to indicate a total suspending of the normal laws of friction. Application of full throttle during the corner caused the front tyres to occasionally drift slightly wider but the loss of traction was very progressive and well-advertised. I didn't have the nerve to deliberately lift off the throttle mid-corner but, having experienced it from the left hand seat, I know that significant oversteer just doesn't occur. Perhaps, if you had biceps like Arnie Schwarzenegger, a pull on the handbrake might persuade the rear end to let go!

As with any other automotive compromise, the advantages of the phenomenal grip from those tyres was offset by an unbelievably heavy steering effort at parking speeds. I think I could put up with that!

The ride was surprisingly supple considering the apparent drastic roll stiffness modifications and, while 'knobblier' at low speed than my 1.9, the

Gutmann car was noticeably tauter and even more comfortable at higher speeds.

For those of you that haven't read the facts and figures elsewhere, this 'Super-Pug' has been accurately measured to reach 60 mph from a standing start in 6.7 seconds and it'll do 139 mph on the autobahn. The full conversion costs £5800 plus VAT but the tyres, springs, etc are available separately and are certainly where I will start once funds can be accumulated and liberated - even with my standard engine. To do the gradual conversion the other way round, installing the engine before the suspension, is definitely not on and the 16-valve motor is only available as part of a complete conversion package.

It is a truly complete package; the Gutmann 16v (Peugeot disapproved of Gutmann sticking an Mi-16 badge on it ... but there would be nothing to stop a private owner doing it) is a no-compromise road sprinter. Every component is chosen or modified only so that the car is the ultimate in B-road demons. If that is where you believe that REAL driving enjoyment is to be had, look no further. Just pay up and grin ...

DAVID YU

LIKES: Unrelenting acceleration
LIKES: Twin cam sound
LIKES: Thorough engineering
LIKES: All-weather grip and traction
LIKES: Stability

DISLIKES: Parking the thing will probably give you a hernia.
DISLIKES: The fact that I can't afford one ... yet!

Forthcoming Attractions:

Our intrepid reporter tracks down - and drives - the Cheetah II, PTS/Longman Motorsport conversion and, of course, the Twin-stage Turbo Technics 1.9! ... Coming soon!!