TOP GEAR RUNNING EXTRAORDINARY.

A Remarkable Demonstration with a Morris-Oxford Light Car. Circling by Itself at 3 m.p.h. on Top Gear.

IF a motor was seen slowly but surely circling round on Brooklands track by itself without either driver or passenger one would immediately jump to the conclusion that it was bewitched, or else that one's brains had become uncontrollable. Imagine, still further, that on a closer examination of the machine it was found to be running on top gear, the ratio of which was 4.6 to 1. Anyone would then naturally come to the conclusion that the age of miracles had returned.

Nevertheless it has been done, and can be done any day, with a standard Morris-Oxford light car.

It was on Wednesday last that we accompanied Mr. L. P. Kent, of Messrs. Stewart and Arden, Ltd., of 18, Woodstock Street, Bond Street, London, W. (the London agents for the Morris-Oxford), to Brooklands on a de luxe model Morris-Oxford. Immediately on reaching the paddock we halted while the driver balanced a pencil on the radiator cap. Although the gusts of wind were only shielded by the windscreen the pencil remained vertical throughout the experiment.

The "straight" was next visited. The driver engaged the top gear, dismounted from the machine and walked leisurely by the side, occasionally correcting the car's course. The speed cannot have been greater than 3 m.p.h., and there was not a sign of the engine misfiring or any rattle in the universal joint. Mr. Kent then locked the front wheels over, and the little car immediately went round in circles, quite happily, by itself. It was a most uncanny spectacle to watch the Morris-Oxford mapping out for itself a circular course. A highly-trained quadruped could not have done it better. For fully 10 minutes it careered round at about 3 m.p.h., and all the time the top gear was being used. No clutch slip was, of course, taking place, and the car was an absolutely standard machine without any additions; there was no extra air inlet or special carburetter. The valves, in fact every part of the machine was quite standard. The carburetter was, of course, carefully adjusted so that the correct amount of petrol and air was taken into the engine. However, any owner of a Morris-Oxford can do likewise if he adjusts the carburetter in the correct manner.

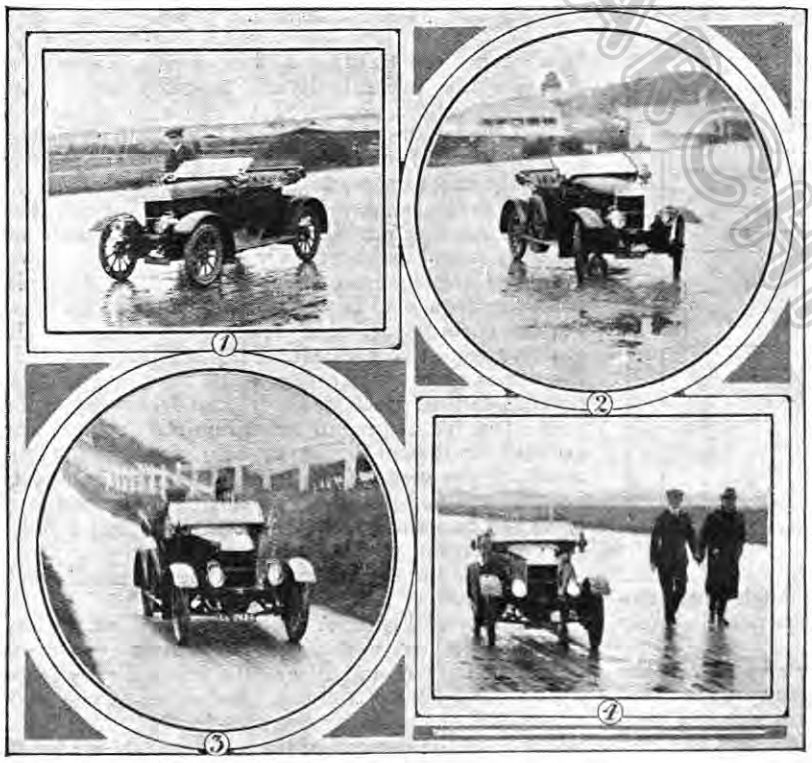
After this performance the driver headed the machine once more down the "straight," put in the top gear, dismounted, and while the machine moved onwards by itself lit the five lamps, two of which were acetylene headlights. Further to demonstrate the remarkable low-speed pulling powers of the engine the driver dropped a handkerchief overboard while on top gear. He then got out, walked back for and picked up the handkerchief, and finally overtook the machine, which was still travelling forward on top gear. Having seated himself once more in the driving seat he immediately accelerated the machine in a remarkable manner.

In order to make certain that there was no deception about the performance we took over the steering and control of the machine ourselves, and with ease we performed the same feats.

Being more than satisfied with the pulling powers at slow speeds of the engine, which, by the way, is a White and Poppe, we thought an attack on the test hill and some speed work would show whether it was equally efficient at high speeds. Three times in succession the test hill was easily climbed from a standing start with two people on board. After this test we finally sped round the track and attained a speed of 45 m.p.h. At no time was any attention given to the machine, the carburetter setting being exactly the same both for slow and fast running tests.

It was a very convincing demonstration. Here was an engine, the bore and stroke of which are 60 mm. and 100 mm. respectively, capable of propelling a car at 3 m.p.h. on a top gear of 4.6 to 1, and also, without any alteration, it would turn over so that a speed of 48 m.p.h. could be attained. This latter speed, it must be remembered, was done on a machine with hood and screen, etc., while a very high wind was also blowing.

On the way down to Weybridge we were afforded a splendid opportunity of noting what a docile and easily-handled machine the Morris-Oxford light car is in traffic. Even after an enforced stop it would accelerate well on "top."



REMARKABLE TOP GEAR TESTS.

(1) Walking beside car on top gear. (2) Car making circles without a driver. (3) On the test hill. (4) Walking beside the travelling car; note lamps alight.