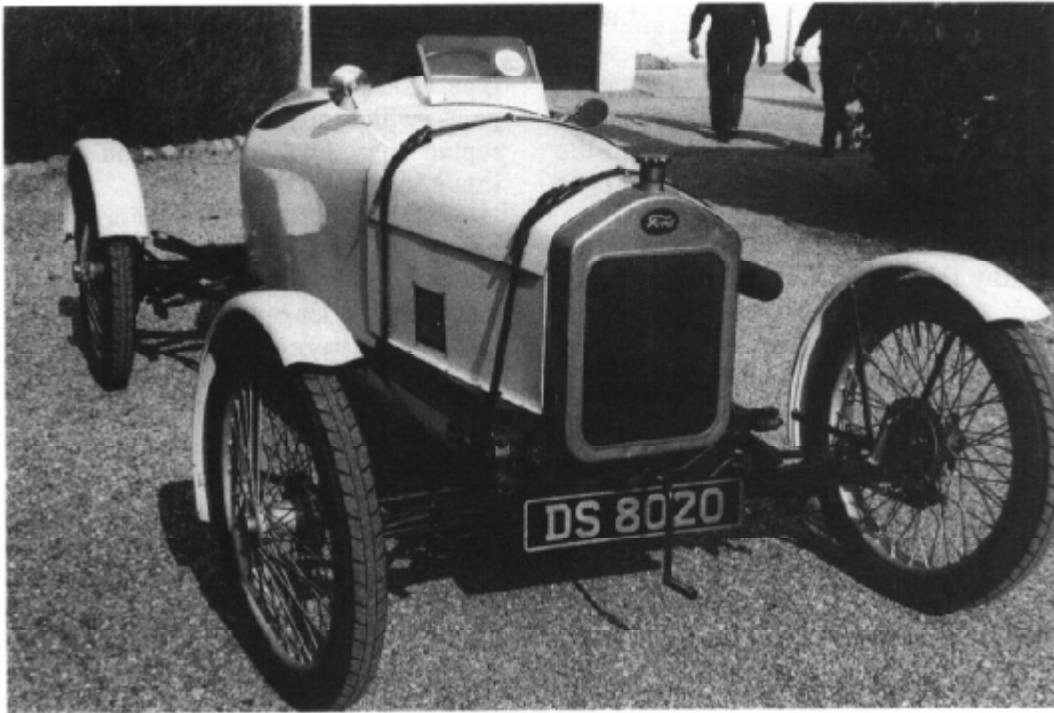


A Rather Special Speedster

by Tony Bowker



Nigel Bradshaw's special Speedster

Most Model T Speedsters are assembled from a random selection of bits and pieces. Parts are found in old barns, at swap meets, and borrowed from friends. In a final act of desperation, owners have even been known to buy new parts from one of the excellent suppliers who advertise in *The Vintage Ford*.

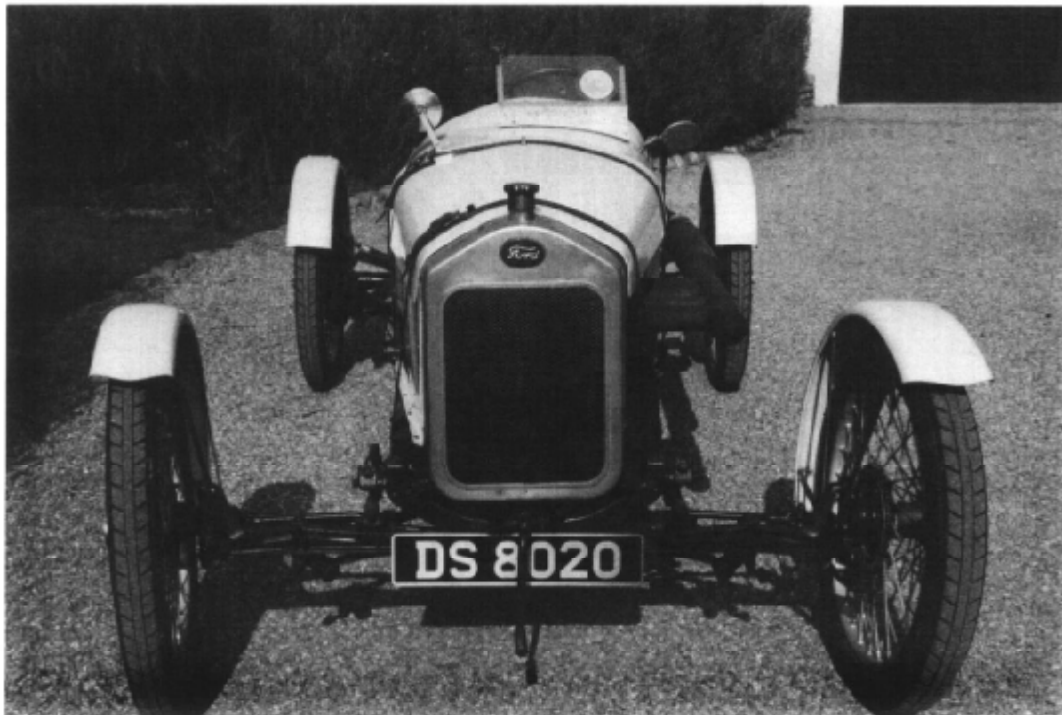
The Speedster shown here, owned by an Englishman, is truly unique. It was built as a Speedster in the early 1920s and is still owned by the same family.

The Speedster's owner is Nigel Bradshaw of Lytham, near Blackpool, in England. The car was built by Nigel's grandfather on a 1917 Trafford Park (English) chassis. When first built, it was driven in many races, including Brooklands in 1924, where it disgraced itself by not completing one lap in its first two races. It was much more successful closer to home when it competed in the 1924 Lancashire Auto Club "flying kilometer" on the Morecambe Sands. It also took part in the Blackpool Speed

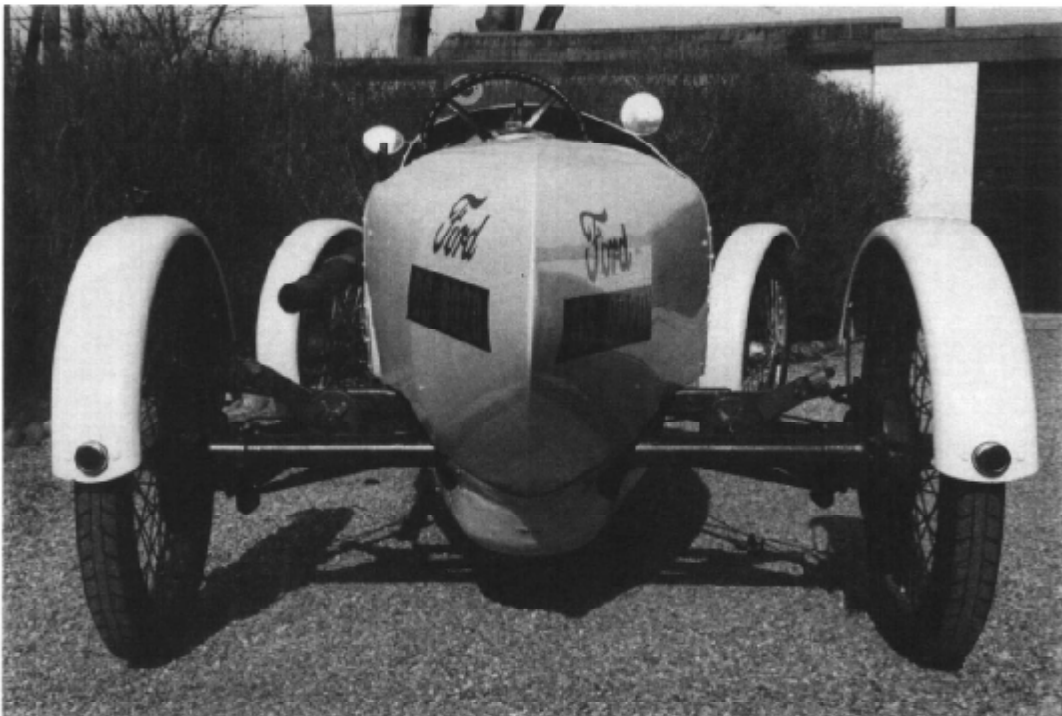
Trials where it was reputed to be doing 102 mph at the finish line!

The Speedster was built using a 3:1 rear end, Thornton Powerlock differential and larger half-shafts, supposedly from a TT Truck. It is fitted with a "Speedway" overhead camshaft 16-valve, twin-plug cylinder head. The head was manufactured by the Craig Hunt Engineering Company, located in Indianapolis. The overhead camshaft is driven by a small diameter vertical shaft and spiral gears at the front of the engine. The valves are inclined in a crossflow arrangement. The original carburetor was a triple-diffuser Zenith. This was later replaced with a less complex, but still temperamental, Zenith. John Toprahanian, a San Diego member and racing carburetor expert, was contacted by Nigel for assistance and a Winfield carburetor is now used. The latest reports claim the car is running well (102 mph?).

Ignition is by a Bosch twin-spark magneto

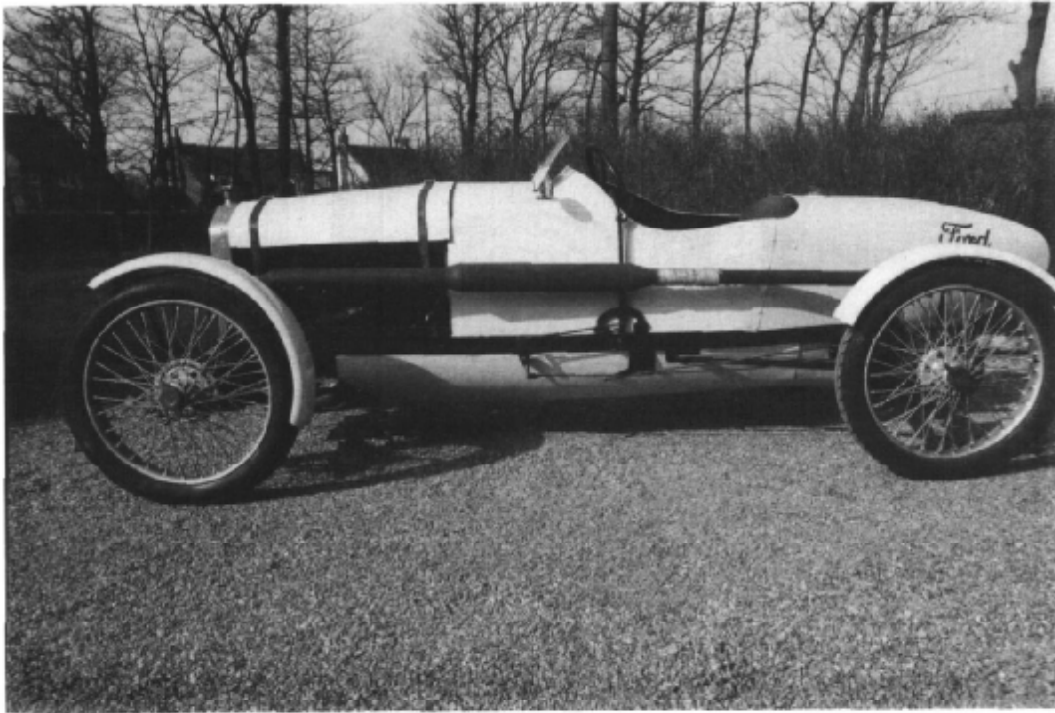


Front and rear view

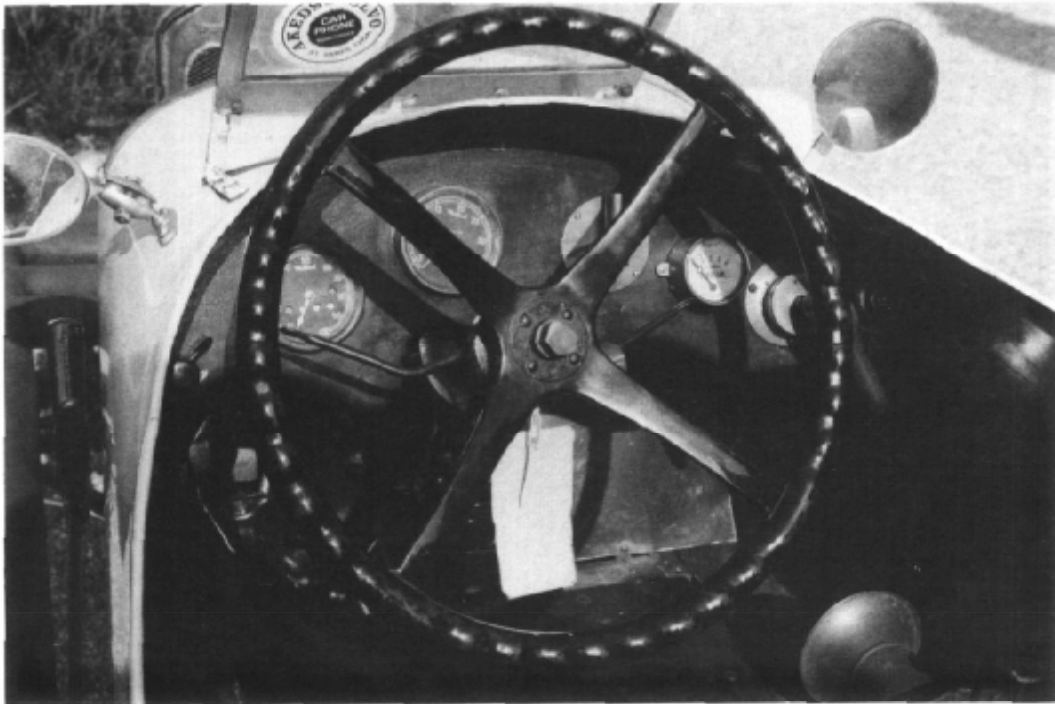


driven from the timing gear and is mounted on the left side. The crankshaft is pressure fed with an oil pump driven off the camshaft. The crankshaft also is balanced with bolted-on weights. The connecting rods are standard

Model T; the flywheel has been drastically lightened; and the pistons are aluminum. The radiator was taken from an early Wolseley Ten and the wire wheels are by Dayton, shod with 30 x 3-1/2 tires. Nigel has fitted Rocky Moun-



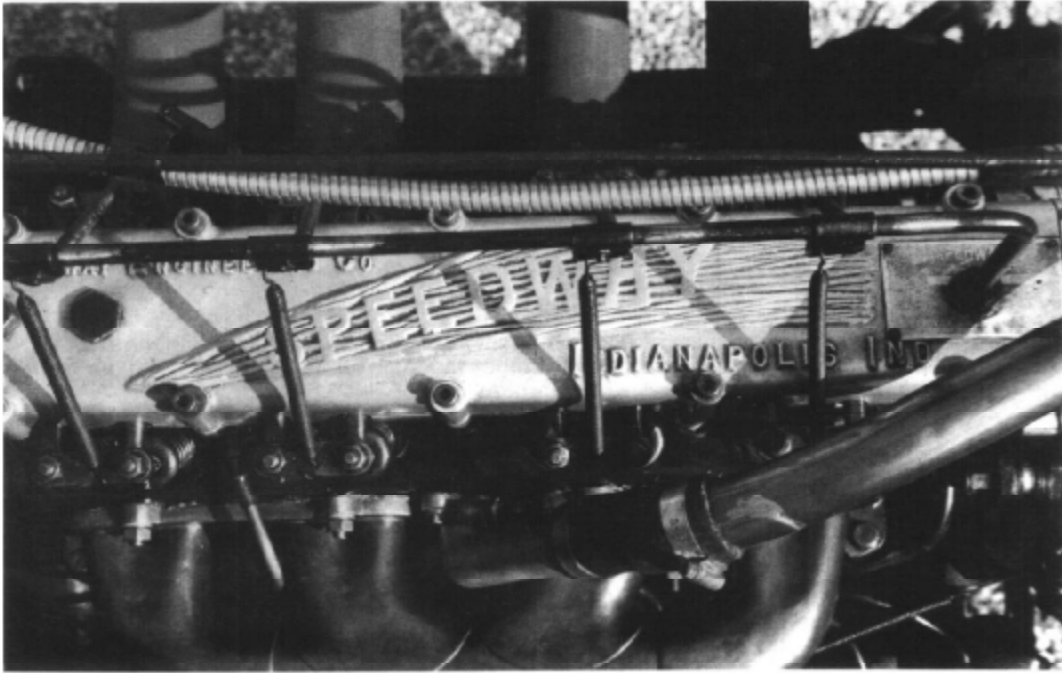
*Top: Side view. Note outboard brake actuating mechanism.
Bottom: Polished wood dash with tachometer, speedometer, and fuel pressure gauges.
Fuel pressure is provided by hand pump mounted on right side of dash.*



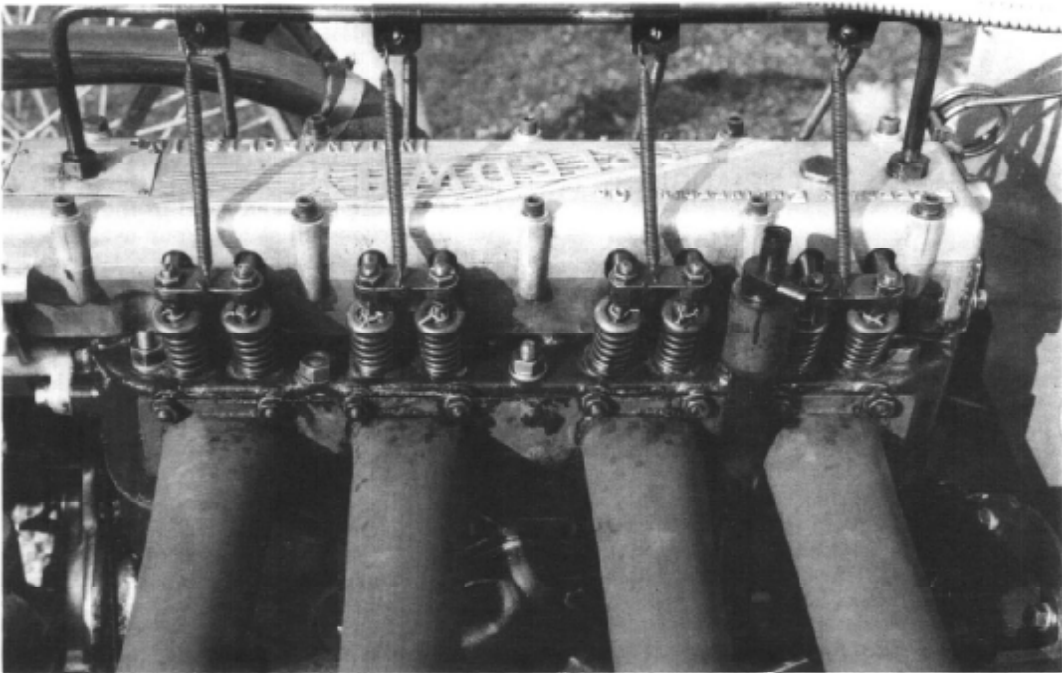
tain brakes on the rear wheels, adding a little braking reassurance to the beast.

The body is doorless, with a small aero screen and cycle-type fenders. The body is

thought to have been manufactured by Craig Hunt. The matching speedometer and rev counter are mounted on a neatly polished dash. Fuel pressure is provided by a hand-



Top and side view of engine



pump with a gauge on the dash. The car has Hartford friction shock absorbers mounted transversely at the front.

The car was put into storage in 1925 and remained there until 1962 when Nigel brought the car back into the daylight. The car runs

easily up to 2500 rpm which is over 70 mph with 3000 available under favorable circumstances. Now that is really moving!

I would like to thank John Toprahanian and Nigel Bradshaw for information and beautiful pictures of this unique Speedster.