

THE BULLET

by Elvin Townsend
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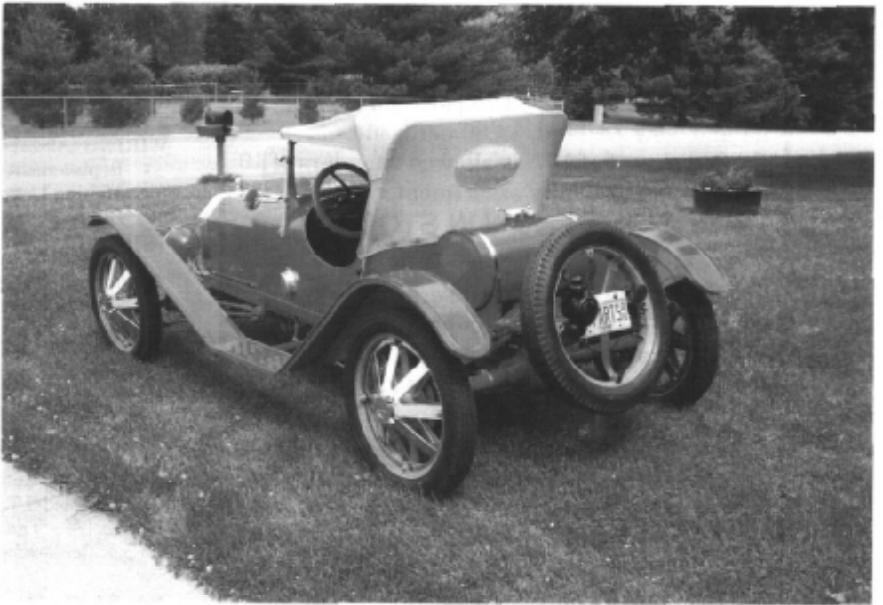
Ed. Note: I first saw "The Bullet" few years ago at a tour in Springfield, Missouri and was "taken" by the craftsmanship and beautiful lines. I asked Elvin, who along with his wife Rosie own a T parts business known as Townsend Automotive, if they would allow us to publish some pictures of their car. Now, for you Speedster fans, ENJOY!

The subject of this article is the Ford we call "The Bullet ! This car has evolved over a number of years; it has seen several character changes and a number of modifications over its life.

Its original name was the Knoxville Bullet. It was put together from ditch-filler parts with the idea of driving to the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1982, a distance of 635 miles one way Well, things came up and business interests prevented us from going to the fair, but the bullet name stayed, less the Knoxville. The name Bullet was stolen from the early racer-The Winton Bullet.

As you can see from the photograph, the first version of the Bullet was a Model T Roadster with Chevrolet disc wheels. This car had the appearance of a real rust bucket but was very sound mechanically and the engine had a Model A crankshaft. We went on our first National tour in this car to Fulton, Missouri in 1983. We had zero mechanical problems but while my wife, Rosie and I really enjoyed the tour, we were ashamed of the car's looks.

The next generation of the Bullet had a reproduction Morton & Brett body and original Morton & Brett windshield. The car retained the old fenders, splash aprons and Chevrolet wheels (Oops-there I said Chevrolet again). Rocky mountain brakes were added and the engine received some

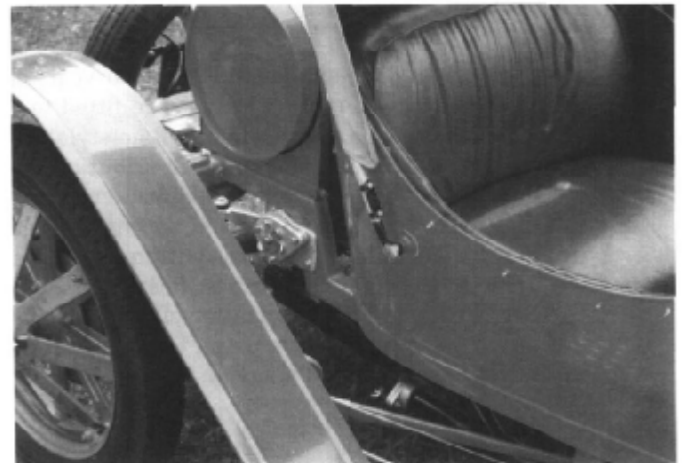
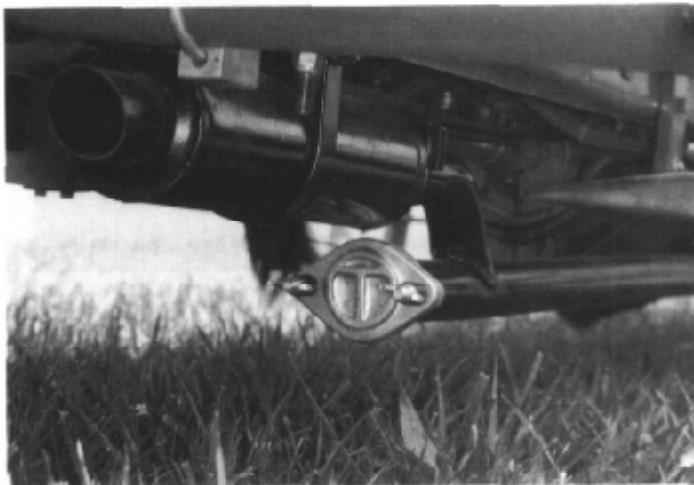
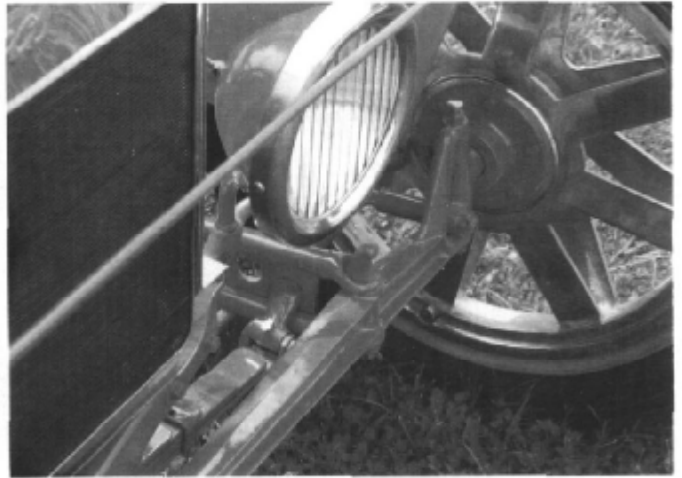
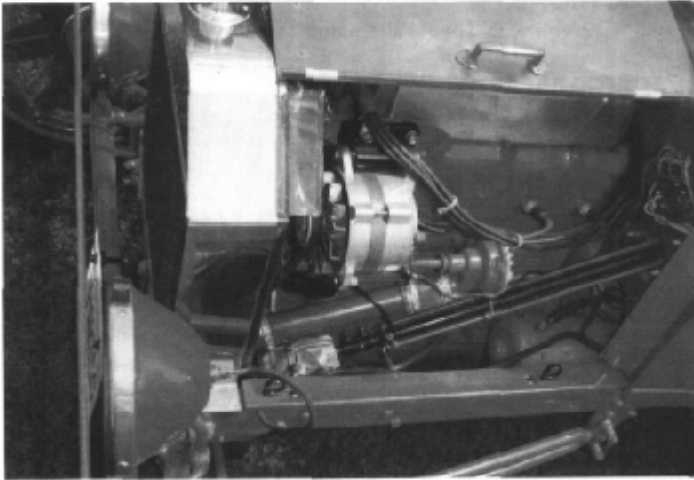
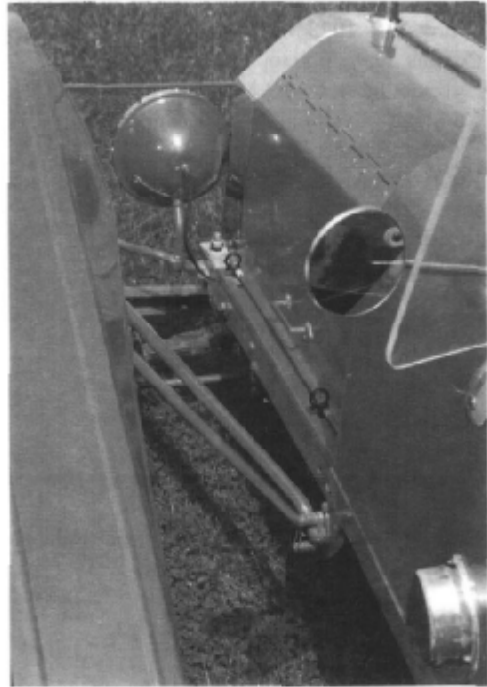
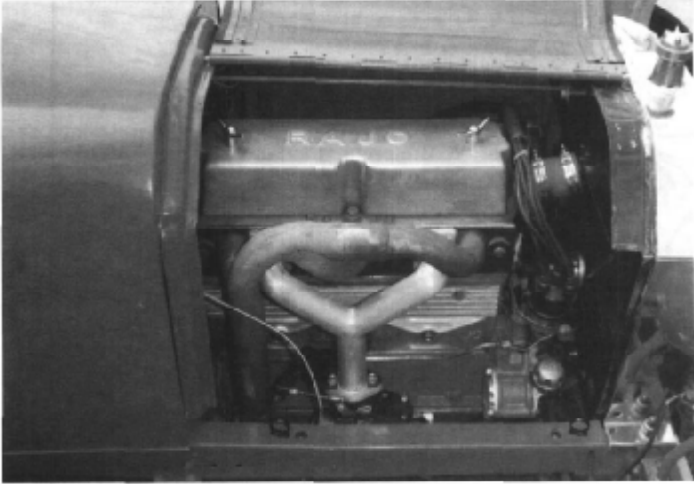


additional speed parts.

After getting rained on numerous times and almost freezing, we added a top and side curtains.

The final version, which was completed in the winter of 1995, has extensive changes. The car was done using speed equipment and techniques that were available during the production years of the Model T. The Bullet has a stepped-frame and split

— DETAILS —



SPECIFICATION SHEET

ENGINE

- Crankshaft: 1928 Model A
- Pistons: Egge, pop top
- Cylinder head: RAJO Model "C"
- Cam and valvetrain: 3/4 race cam, 1-1/2 to 1 rockers
- Exhaust: Header with Lake plug
- Induction: Alum. manifold with Carter BB-I carburetor
- Ignition: Bosch front plate distributor
- Water pump: Western Auto

TRANSMISSION

- Flywheel: balanced, no magnets
- Clutch: Turbo 400 clutch plates
- Bands: Kevlar
- Fourth main: ball bearing

FRONT AXLE

- Standard Ford, spring behind with side radius rods, 1926-27 spindle

REAR AXLE

- Ruckstell with 3-to-1 gears

BRAKES

- Rocky Mountain auxiliary, cable operated

BODY

- Body: Morton & Brett reproduction
- Windshield: original Morton & Brett
- Hood: 1911 Torpedo (2 longer than standard)
- Fuel tank: 15 gal round with gauge and wing cap
- Fenders: Rootlieb with shortened running boards

WHEELS

- Bugatti-style, similar to Type 35 G, made by owner

STEERING GEAR:

- Saginaw Corvair, aluminum case

ELECTRICAL

- 12-volt with Toyota alternator

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

- Top, side curtains, tonneau cover
- Wind wings
- Tachometer, 0/2500
- Side cowl vents



wishbone, both done similar to Fronty race cars of the 1920s. Rocky Mountain brakes are fitted to a Ruckstell axle. The engine has a Rajo-style "C" overhead, and Bosch front plate distributor conversion, as well as many other modifications.

This car is not a trailer queen and has racked up over 35,000 miles. If a tour is within 100 miles, we drive to the tour. Oftentimes, Rosie and I use the car like modern transportation often ending up 100 or so miles from home. Usual tour speed is 45 mph. We have travelled short distances at speeds

well over 70 mph.

The Bullet, although we call it a 1915, is actually a built-up car of many years and many accessory items. We hope it is what granddad would have built in the heyday of the "T" era.

While an authentic restoration is most desirable, we cannot ignore the fact that the "T" was a test bed for speed equipment and accessories. To some, this is a hobby within a hobby. I enjoy both and we are in the process of restoring a 1909 T, serial number 2520.