

EXCLUSIVE?

The recent testing of a turbine powered car for the Indianapolis is a matter of great interest to all motor racing enthusiasts. This car which rejoices in the name of the SACFIREBOID may well be the forerunner of a similar lineage in Europe.

Except for a huge exhaust pipe protruding from the bonnet, the Car's outward appearance is the same as a Kurtis 500K racing car - it had in fact run second at Indianapolis in 1952 before being purchased by Firestone for experimental purposes. From the bulk-head back it is unaltered but ahead of the bulkhead there is a maze of tubing and miscellaneous equipment resembling a well filled bin of assorted parts in an aircraft surplus store. The powerplant is a 195 b.h.p. Boeing 202 gas turbine of the type used to start jet engines.

Running gear and powerplant are mated by means of an adaptor plate between the engines driven unit and the transmission - no clutch is necessary with the turbines torque transmission system. No alterations to the chassis are made other than removal of the radiator and the fabrication of relatively simple engine mounting brackets. Instruments are changed but the controls remain basically the same.

Starting is easy. The starter is pressed and held on until the compressor engine reaches 15,000 r.p.m. (with the brakes locked on), then the fuel switch is flicked and she's running.

Power in the form of the compressor's hot exhaust gases is directed to the driven member, which is linked directly to the car's two speed transmission. The smooth transmission of power is ideal for fast or slow getaways, although there is no slowing down on compression when the throttle is eased. This free-wheeling effect makes good brakes mandatory and Bendix is currently developing a set of multiple-biscuit spot brakes for the car.

There is no jolt-in-the-back- take off, but a sudden awareness of moving, and moving fast. Quickest standing quarter on test was 11.6 seconds. This was made without any attempt being made to select a proper rear end gearing. It was a high gear take off which by comparison effectively shot down a Chrysler 300 powered Allard K3 even though the Allard did get off the line first.

Cruising in the turbine car is quite a sensation no vibration, no loud noise from the exhaust, no effort, just a hissing whine of the type generally associated with jet aircraft.

The whole project was started in the interests of experiment. Firestone wanted more speed in a car for their tyre tests and Boeing were interested in further research with turbine powered cars.

Don't take the 195 b.h.p. machines efforts too lightly. There's a 500 b.h.p. power plant, almost the same size, just waiting for the chance to show it's paces!

FAR FLUNG OUTPOSTS

We shall shortly have to consider the advisability of opening a branch of the club in the U.S.A.!

Another of our American members returned home recently, Martin Freeman, whose name immediately conjures up pictures of pairs of M.G.s prancing themselves all over the Suffolk countryside during rallies with nice slow averages!

We understand that Martin hopes to have a word in the ear of his War Office (or equiv. establishment) and get a posting back to U.K. We wish him luck.