

SILENT MERE.—This pleasant pool, bordered with silver birch and firs, lies by the quiet way near Easthampstead

GOING WEST QUIETLY

An Out-of-the-crush Journey to Devon

by E. H. Row

GORDON MARSHALL, in his article "An A90 on A30," which appeared in "The Motor" last autumn, described that road as "the most congested of them all." In this he spoke no more than truth for, although I am familiar with A30, and have used it scores of times, I know of no other way which induces to such an extent that state of nervous irritation which causes one to do silly things. And that is in normal, work-a-day times. On a fine Bank Holiday week-end, conditions become even more intolerable.

Thus it was that, having a job of work to do in the West Country during Easter, efforts were made to find some alternative way which, though it may take a little longer, would at least enable one to progress pleasantly and at one's own speed. Happily, a set of those excellent "Quiet Way" routes, which Price's, the oil people, used to issue before the war (unfortunately they are no longer available), came to light, and the one leading from London to Barnstaple, so far as it suited our purpose, was the route decided upon.

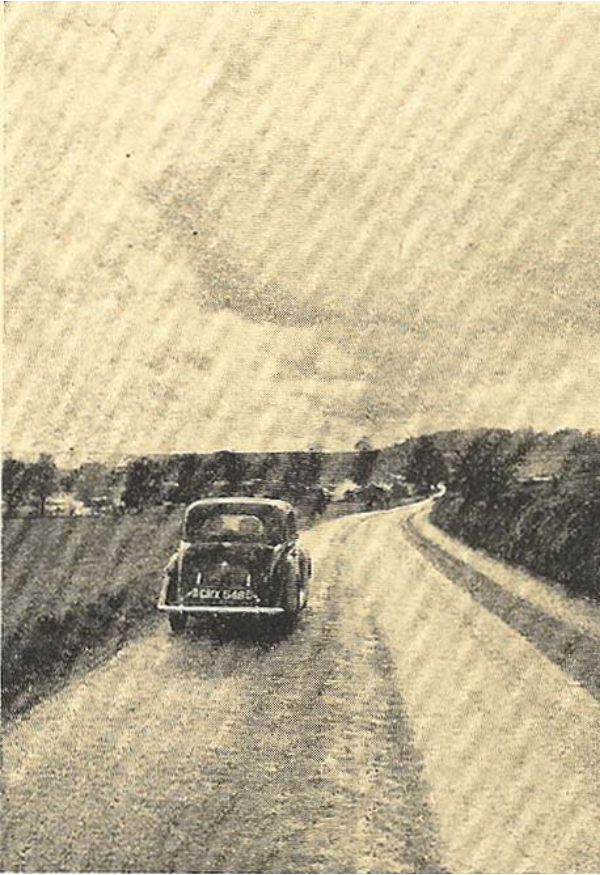
A Guide to Others

Realizing that there must now be many motorists who do not own these maps and who may like to try the way we went, the publishers have kindly given me permission to reproduce the route card, which I do, as far as Taunton. The road numbers given are those pertaining

to 1939 but, while no very careful check was kept, it was found that they remain about the same to-day.

With the whole of Good Friday to get from London to Exford, on the Devon and Somerset border, there was no need to hurry, although the means of transport—a 1¼-litre M.G. saloon—is a car in which one can motor quite rapidly when occasion demands. Occasion did, in fact, demand during the first short leg along the Great West Road which, perforce, one had to take to get out of London. Fortunately a lively engine, happy choice of gear ratios and general handiness got us through this section more speedily than most and thereafter pace was governed by the inclination of the moment. Did a particularly photogenic piece of countryside inspire the manipulation of cameras, we could stop without fear of causing congestion. On suitable stretches the M.G. could be given its head unobstructed by "Aunties in Anglias" and Sammies in Sevens. Did the inclination arise to dawdle between primrose-lined hedges, one could do so without the accompaniment of exasperated hootings from behind—a pleasant way to travel for those to whom time is of little moment.

Windsor Great Park was a deserted expanse; Ascot,



ACROSS THE PLAIN.—The less-used A road across Salisbury Plain between Shrewton and Heytesbury is wide, well surfaced and, consequently, fast.

Going West Quietly **Continued**

basking in the spring sunshine, showed few signs of life and the drive along the Nine Mile Ride, between pine woods in which gangs of woodcutters eased their backs to watch us pass, on through Eversley and over Heckfield Heath, was through an almost deserted countryside, in fact, at one point where navigation went slightly awry, it was quite some time before anyone appeared who could help us back on our way.

To my mind, no way, however quiet, can be said to be perfect that has no good hostelry en route, and it was pleasant to stop at the "Wellington Arms." on A33 at Stratfieldsaye, where drinks of the right sort were served in a cool and attractive bar. As we were carrying a picnic lunch, there was no need to stop for a

meal; nevertheless, an appetizing smell suggested that this would have been possible had we so desired.

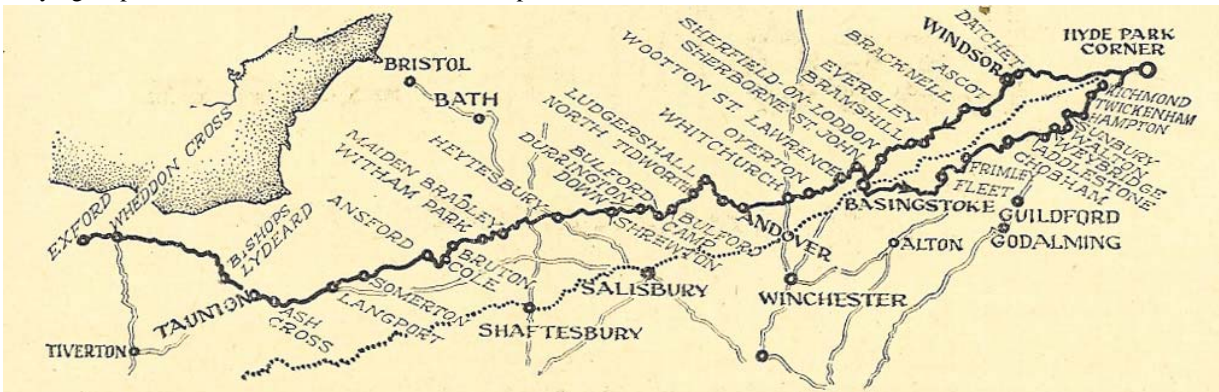
It was this picnic business that caused at least half an hour's delay. We had pulled into a field through which led a track but, when ready to leave, found our exit blocked by a lorry on to which faggots of bean sticks were being loaded. We could, I suppose, have requested the men to move the lorry. Instead, we stayed to watch the loading and marvel whence comes the increase in price from the 2s. 6d. per faggot which these people get. Having cut, trimmed, bundled and carried their faggots, to the amount one has to pay buying them from a normal retailer.

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LONDON to TAUNTON

Road No	Miles	Road No	Miles
A4	—	A338	2¼
A331	18	A3028	—
"	1¼	B3086	6¾
A332	1½	A360	½
A329	6½	A344	¼
A3095	2½	A36	8½
"	1½	B3095	1¼
—	1¼	—	—
A327	6¼	—	—
"	¾	—	—
—	—	—	—
A33	4	A359	9½
—	3¾	—	—
—	3	—	—
—	2¾	A371	¾
—	2½	—	—
B3400	1	B3153	1¼
A303	8½	"	5¾
A342	7	"	4
—	¾	"	¼
A3026	4½	B3153	5
—	—	B358	13

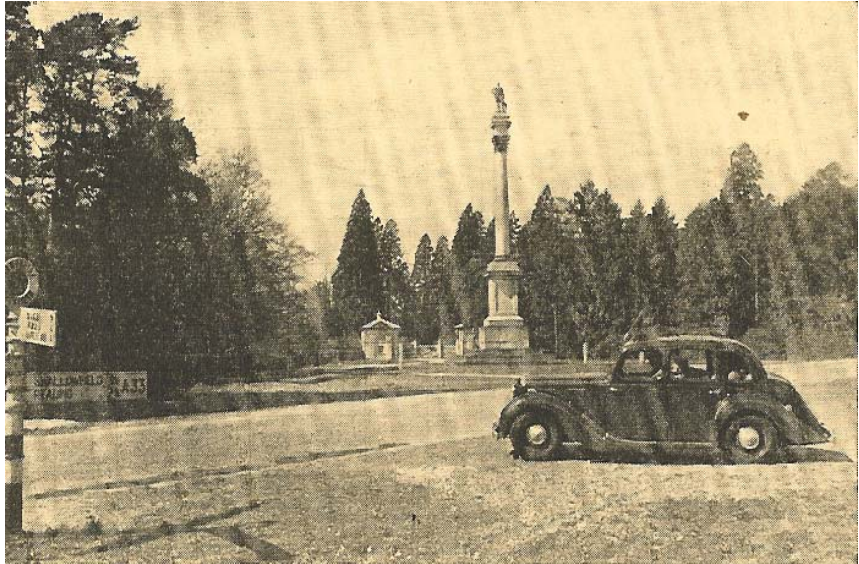
Leave London by the Great West Road, A4. At Colnbrook By-pass keep R. then at cross roads, turn L. along A331. At 1m. beyond, turn R. to Datchet, where turn R. for Windsor. Here, turn L. along A332 then at fork, 1 m. on, keep R. and cross Windsor Great Park. At Ascot, turn R. along A329 to Bracknell, where turn L. By station, turn R. then bear R. along A3095. At 1¼ m. past Easthampstead, turn R. along Nine Mile Ride. At 5 m. on, turn L. and ¼ m. further, again turn, L. to Eversley, where turn R. and to, beyond again turn R. Cross Bramshill Common and Heckfield Heath to join A33, where turn L. to Sherfield-upon-Loddon. Turn R. and 2m. on, traverse level crossing to Bramley. Keep L. to Sherbourne St. John then at Wootton St. Lawrence turn L. to join B3400, where turn R. and follow same through Whitchurch to Andover. Join A303 to Weyhill then keep R. along A342 to Ludgershall. Keep L. along A3026 to North Tidworth where turn L. and by railway bridge ahead, bear R. At Bulford Camp turn R. and at Bulford turn L. then R. and again R. along A3028. Cross Durrington Down for Shrewton, where, on entering, turn L. At end, turn R. along A360 for ¼ m. then bear L. along A344 and on joining A36 turn R. to Heytesbury. At ½ m. beyond, turn L. along B3095 to Longbridge Deverill where turn R. along A350 to Park Cross. Turn L. to Maiden Bradley. Cross B3092 and 2½ m. on, by Witham Park turn L. and ½ m. to, beyond, turn R. At Bruton join A359, bear round to L. pass under railway and turn R. to Cole then at Hadspen, turn P. On joining A371 turn R. through Ansford, at end, turn R. to join B3153, where turn L. At Somerton Erleigh, turn R., then in Somerton. turn L. then R. and proceed to Langport and Taunton.



THE QUIET WAY.—Map of the route taken from London to Exford. A30 is indicated by the dotted line. The heavily marked route, from Basingstoke through Chobham, is a further diversion schemed out on the return journey.

**Going West Quietly —
Contd.**

EMINENT SOLDIER. — A statue of the Duke of Wellington stands high on a column where the Eversley road joins A33.



Finally, however, we were on our way again through Andover, away to the north of Amesbury, and off along A344. From a motoring point of view, this is a grand road, well surfaced and with long, easy gradients up which the M.G. sped at a rate of knots. Moreover, although a main highway, it appears to be far less used than the more popular A303, farther south.

And so we came to Bruton and tea-time. This sleepy little Somerset town is notable for its fine church tower, Sexey's Hospital—a seventeenth-century almshouse—and a three-storeyed pigeon cote, sole relic of a medieval abbey. To judge from the fact that, search as we would, we could find no hotel at which tea could be obtained, few visitors come to see these wonders. As is usually the case when one searches for the unattainable, tea immediately became of paramount importance. Finally we took it in a pleasant, though obscure, little tea-room worthy of comment if only for the small amount of money asked for so much food so well served.

For a little farther the way kept to a quiet main road—as far as Ansford, to be precise—and then, once again, led off along by-ways through Keinton Mandeville and Somerton Erleigh (lovely names for sleepy old villages) to Somerton, standing on a hill and with an attractive old circular market building. It was in this town, while filling up with petrol, that we encountered one of those rare models, a 1932 Riley Stelvio saloon, still in the hands of its original owner and still in its original paint, looking almost as good as the day it left the works.

What with pottering, stopping for photographs and our faggot-loading episode, we estimated that, to reach

the “Crown” at Exford in time for dinner would not allow further following of the planned “Quiet Way,” which made quite something of a detour to the north through Othery. Accordingly, from Langport the main road to Taunton was taken, and thence local knowledge planned its own quiet way through Bishop's Lydeard and then across the Brendon Hills along a little-used, but fast road to Wheddon Cross, Exford, and dinner.

There must be something in the training of naval officers which makes them particularly suitable for hotel keeping in their retirement, for seldom have I found a badly kept hotel with an ex-naval man running the show. Although we had “picked it with a pin” the Crown,” which is most cheerfully run by Comm. Castens, D.S.O., and who maintains this reputation, provided just the sort of accommodation we were looking for.

So ended our “Quiet Way” run—a pleasant meander through “unexplored territory” and, if not the fastest of routes, at least as quick as A30 on a Bank Holiday week-end.



LOADING STICKS. —A hold up, after a picnic lunch, while faggots of bean sticks were loaded onto a lorry

END OF THE ROAD.—The M.G. outside the Crown Hotel at Exford on the Devon and Somerset border, where the crew were well lodged and fed.

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