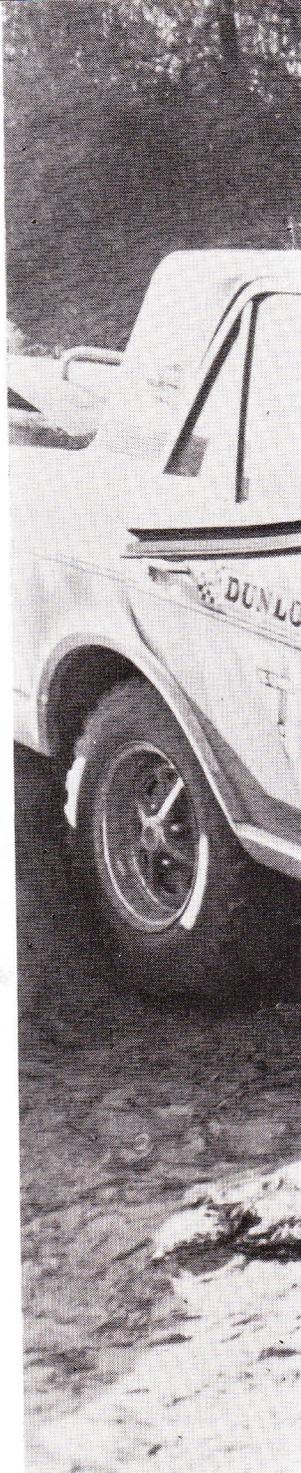


# DOWN THE DITCH

THERE were casualties on the 1,000-mile Delhi to Bombay lap and this was one: car No. 96, a Ford Cortina 1600 driven by Alec Sheppard with co-driver Ronald Rogers left the road and somersaulted 20 ft. down a railway embankment shortly before Agra and the Taj Mahal. Sheppard broke his collar-bone but Rogers escaped with bruises.



*from page 23*

had been wrecked 60 miles along the road to Kabul. Co-driver Ian Mackelden said: "We were overtaking a Mercedes on a bend when the camber proved too steep and we rolled over twice before a stanchion stopped us going down a 50ft drop."

The fast, heavy Australian-built Holdens, which had dropped points on the twisting mountain roads, now came into their own on the long straight run across eastern Persia and Afghanistan. First into Kabul was the Sydney Telegraph team led by Harry Firth. Close behind was fellow-Australian Dave McKay. He said: "In each town people packed the sides of the road and we have ex-

perienced some uncertain moments when small children have run out in front of us. But to take the lead it was a question of steeling ourselves to the task and letting the crowds make their own arrangements about getting out of our way. Through Kandahar we picked up a police escort. But instead of arresting us, he led us with siren blaring at 100 miles an hour out of town."

Other drivers weren't so lucky. B.M.C. works driver Tony Fall suffered a setback shortly after Teheran when the suspension of his 1800 collapsed. Another B.M.C. driver, Ruano Aaltonen, drove almost the whole way to Kabul with the front end of his car held together by wire



and masking tape after plunging into a ditch. He and co-driver Henry Liddon used the car's winches to pull the front bodywork out of the driver's compartment. But both cars stayed in the rally.

Innes Ireland's Mercedes, despite a rear tyre blow-out at 100 miles an hour, was the third car to screech to a halt on the outskirts of Kabul—and it was only the outskirts. For the cars were slowed to walking pace on the last five miles into the city centre as they cut their way through a sea of brown men in turbans and heavily veiled women. As an American resident said: "For 2,000 years they have been waiting for the 20th century. This is it."

It was the wildest welcome of the Marathon yet. Around the control point police repeatedly charged the crowd as they pressed 20 deep round the cars, screaming and hitting the bodywork. Fighting broke out when a uniformed guard at the elegant Spinzar Hotel tried to drive the crowd away from the entrance with a whip.

But by Friday night only 33 cars had reached Kabul control within their allotted times. The saddest task for control marshalls was to inform Robbie Uniack that his wife had been killed that day in a car crash in Britain. He flew back home at once, thus putting his BMW 2000 officially out of the rally, though it continued on.



*Wild, rugged, roads twisting hairpin-wise but smooth and fast. Here on the*

## KABUL—SAIROBI —DELHI

IN KABUL too, Marathon organisers were surprised to hear that the Afghan authorities had been making repairs to the road on the notorious Lataband Pass, specially chosen for its ruggedness. A charming apology note said: "We hope you will not sue us for playing foul."

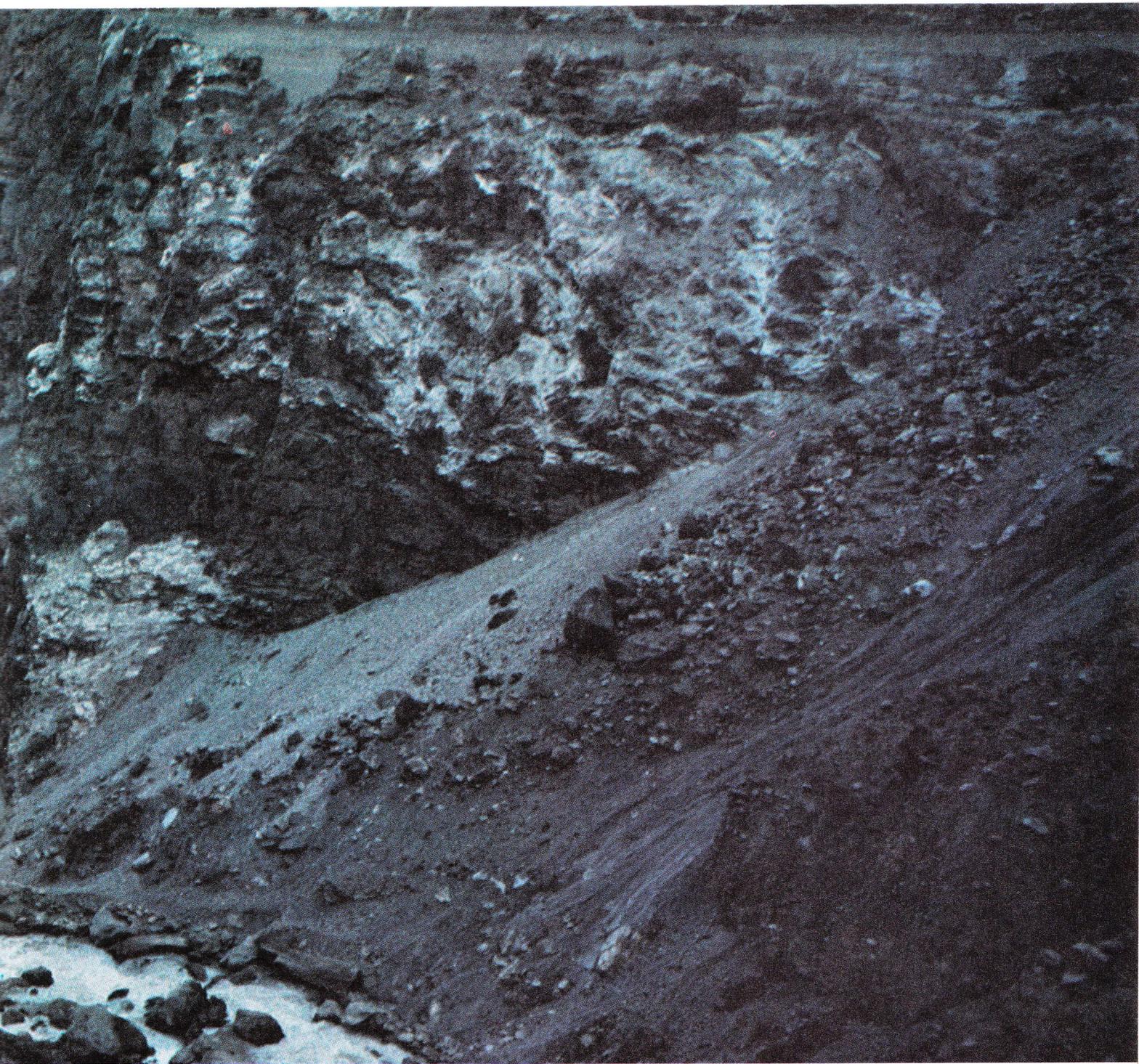
The pass, a flint road that twists down from Kabul's freezing cold to near-tropical Sairobi on the way to the Khyber and Pakistan, had been described beforehand as "enough to shatter the illusions of the toughest competitors." But in improving the surface the Afghans had

also loosened it and added a further discomfort—dust. This rose hundreds of feet into the still air as the cars slid round the Lataband's treacherous bends. It was dust in everything, dust for breakfast at Sairobi control. "It's the Grey and White Marshalls Show," said an official tartly.

This tough section was sorting out even the best of the field. Paddy Hopkirk lost five minutes in his works B.M.C. 1800. "Thank God that's over," he muttered as he signed in at control. Roger Clark lost five minutes too, though with a total of only 11 penalties he was still holding a clear lead. But of course the Lataband took its toll.

Zasada's Porsche arrived dramatically on three tyres

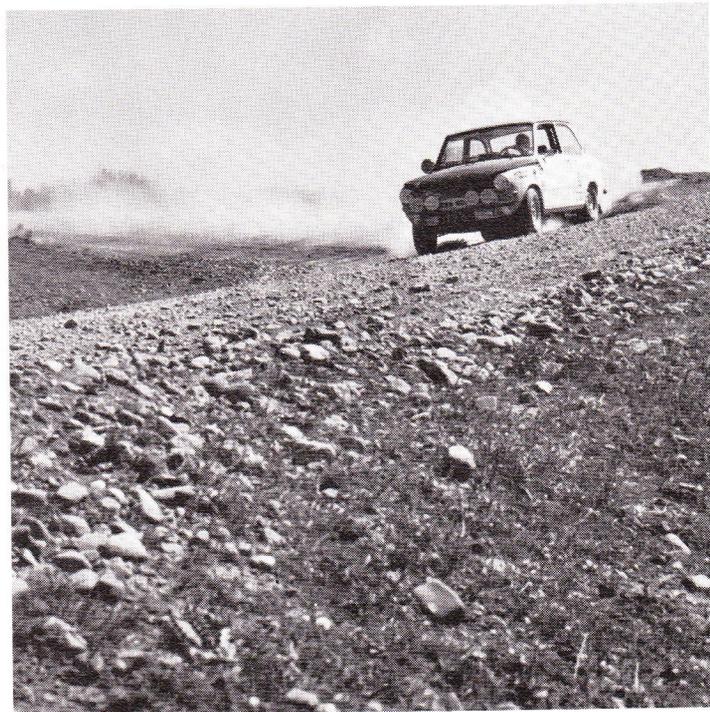
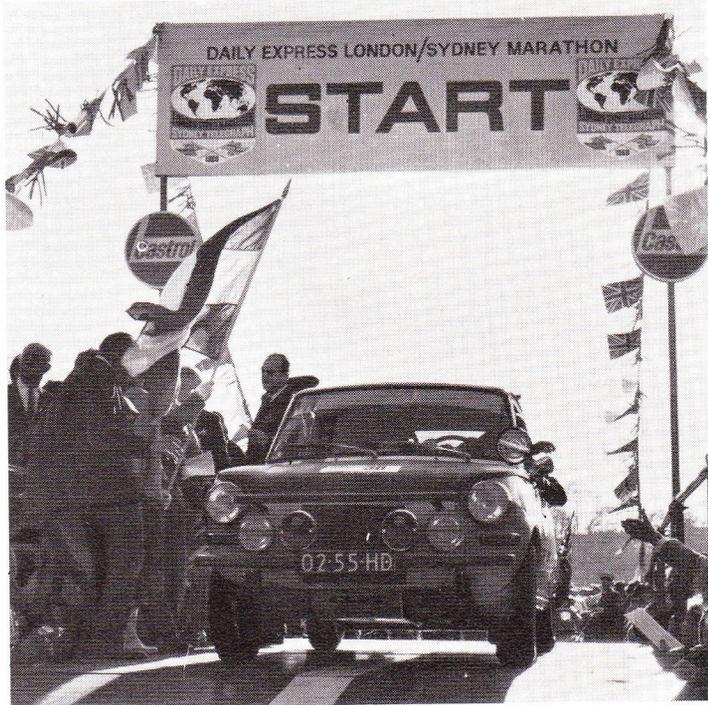
*continued on page 32*



*North-West Frontier was one of the most spectacular stages of the Marathon*



*High-fliers get down to earth: the R.A.F. Red Arrows Marathon team*



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*Elsie Gadd's women's team—first to Bombay. Below: Roger Clark shows trophy to Rosemary Smith.*

## CHECKPOINT BOMBAY

TO INDIAN motorists the capital of New Delhi and the bustling commercial centre of Bombay might have been island dots in an ocean linked only by airliners. That was before the Marathon. The thought of crossing 1,500 miles of dusty plains and mountainous bandit badlands (India's last Robin Hood was gunned down a few years back) in the family saloon just never occurred to them.

Now that 73 cars, most of them family saloons, have done it almost overnight, the lure of the opened-up road is bound to catch on, judging by the enthusiastic comments of Indian motorists who never seriously considered it before. It came as a surprise, almost a revelation. Petrol stations, wayside curry houses and all the other paraphernalia of the motor road must inevitably spring up in the wake of this first Marathon to provide for what promises to be the fashionable thing to do—long-distance motoring.

Another revelation brought by the Marathon: India is suddenly found to be a mere week away from London overland. Though few if any are likely to make it with marathon speed, the startling new thought brings Europe much closer. This in fact has already got a few motoring live-wires examining the prospects of beating the Suez Canal closure by overland road haulage. The Cape route by ships adds 25 per cent to imports from western Europe, so the potential of road haulage along the old camel caravan trails to the Orient looks good.

Cars in what Indian newspapers dubbed a 'carathon' had the eyes of great crowds all along the route popping with interest at what to them were revolutions in design and power and gadgetry—like a glimpse into the future.

In India imports are whittled to the bone and Customs duties are prohibitive on cars. Apart from the rare plush limousines of merchant rajahs, senior officials or foreign diplomats, car spotting is restricted to the Indian built Ambassador, a near copy of the old Morris Oxford of



many years gone by. Most of the cars honking their way through the city bedlam of pony tongas, bullock carts, tricycle rickshaws and teeming pedestrians spilling far into the roadway are A-40 taxis chuddering and wheezing and straining fit to burst the bits of wire holding most of them together. Come the year, surely not far ahead, when they all collapse in a monumental heap, their replacement is yet another immense problem facing India. The cost will be enormous. There could be fortunes to be made in mass second-hand sales to India.

Certainly the marathon brought a flush of excitement, perhaps the promise of brighter things to come that will not soon be forgotten in villages along its route where time has stood still.

**STEPHEN HARPER**

and a rim, shedding rubber wildly. Australian Bob Holden's Volvo came in, appropriately, like a kangaroo, its rear shock absorbers useless although new ones were fitted only the previous night. The village beyond control became a teeming garage area as crews struggled to repair Lataband damage before the Khyber Pass.

Rosemary Smith was running on three cylinders after a piston burned out—the same trouble that put Soderstrom's Cortina out. But mechanics removed the offending piston and she drove on with the other three.

Army majors Freddie Preston and Mike Bailey, who had already been delayed by a broken suspension to their Rover 2000 in Persia, had more trouble in Kandahar with the other half of the suspension. This time they transferred all the tools and spare tyres from the boot to the bonnet, and Mike Bailey, wrapped in a sleeping bag, rode for three and a half hours on the kangaroo bar in front of the car to minimise the strain on the back. It was probably the "hairiest" ride of the whole marathon.

## DELHI —BOMBAY

THE good modern road through the Khyber Pass presented few problems to competitors as they set out for Pakistan, and the Indian border. The big surprise was the way officials of both countries forget their political differences in the interests of the Marathon. The frontier which was virtually closed three years ago was now wide open for the long cavalcade. The Indians were delighted at the way the Marathon had opened up the road to the East. An official of the Delhi Motor Club said: "The Daily Express has done more for India in one week than the United Nations have done in 15 years."

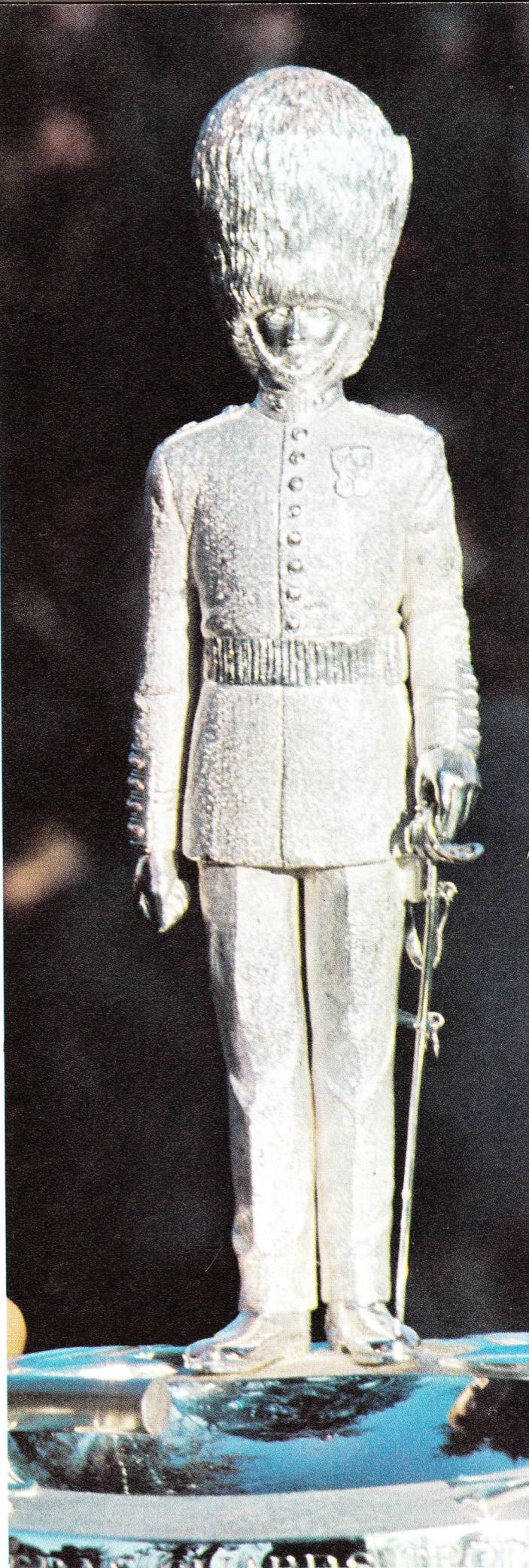
India really opened its heart to the crews. All the way from the border millions lined the road, swamping the weary drivers, touching the windscreens for luck, throwing flowers and notes about the road ahead into the cars.

Roger Clark said: "Often spectators were all over the car, hanging on the roof and boot. I had to accelerate to shake them off—but still they would hang on for hundreds of yards. It was very frightening—far worse than the Lataband Pass."

By Saturday night the first cars were streaming into Delhi. Most crews had time to snatch a brief rest. Others merely took a quick shower before pressing on to Bombay—and the hope of one of the places on the ship to Perth. Fatigue was the main peril after a week of snatched sleep and almost non-stop driving. It was the survival of the fittest now.

That last Asian section brought more crashes and breakdowns. A French Simca crashed in the bandit badlands of Gwalior and the crew had to be evacuated to hospital by helicopter. Australians Bob Holden and Laurence Graham were taken to Delhi with slight facial

*The Guards Trophy—with  
it went £2,000 to Roger Clark  
and Ove Anderssen for winning  
the Marathon to Bombay*





*Off for the next lap. The s.s. Chusan sails with 72 cars aboard for Fremantle and the tough Australian stage*

injuries after their Volvo crashed with a lorry in Patiala. Alec Sheppard's Cortina 1600 was wrecked near Agra after going out of control on a bend.

Meanwhile the stragglers were making heroic efforts to catch up. Australia's Max Winkler, who lost 12 points for repairs after losing a valve in Istanbul, drove for 64 hours without stopping for anything but fuel and oil and reached Delhi with 14 minutes to spare. There he changed the studded ice tyres he had used all the way and disappeared again into the night.

The Sydney Telegraph girls' team was held up with suspension trouble. One of them said: "We drove for over 500 miles with the car leaning over at an angle. We dared not speed up because of the noise it made. Then we all got fed up with it, turned the radio on full blast to drown the noise and drove as fast as we could."

The Army Landrover plodded on manfully. Said Lieut. Gavin Thompson: "We don't have the speed, but we shall arrive in Sydney in good shape while most of these flashy cars will be clapped out junk. We've not even changed a sparking plug."

Jack Murray's Holden, which had gone through three back axles since Teheran, arrived in Delhi needing a fourth. The only other Holden in town was a brand new one destined for the Indonesian ambassador. He immediately gave permission for the axle to be removed.

And so to Bombay and another screaming welcome from millions who had waited hours for a brief glimpse of the

cars. Roger Clark and Ove Anderssen, the overall leaders of the Asian section, were given a floodlit reception and garlanded in pink and white flower necklaces.

The next day, with their cars safely locked up to be put on board ship, the crews shook off the fatigue of the past week with the dust that disappeared under cooling showers to face a gruelling social round. Others were still making desperate efforts to reach Bombay, or having got there, to lick their cars into shape for the second stretch across Australia.

The P. and O. line made desperate efforts to accommodate every car that actually arrived in Bombay. And when the s.s. Chusan finally sailed on Wednesday, she had on board 72 of the 98 cars that set out from Crystal Palace. Saddest men at the quayside were David Skittrall whose Lotus Cortina had broken down 364 miles short of Bombay, and Italy's ace rally driver Giancarlo Baghetti who drove in with his Lancia in time to make the sailing but was disqualified through losing his logbook in Afghanistan.

Just before the ship sailed Roger Clark and Ove Anderssen the leaders at Bombay, were presented with their £2,000 prize and the Carreras Guards Trophy. Making the presentation Alan Gardner, Carreras publicity director, said: "The only pity of the ceremony here this evening is that we have but one prize when everyone who got here deserves an Olympic gold medal just for the achievement."