

1928 Hispano Suiza H6C "Boulogne"

Chassis No: 12400

Engine No: 320387

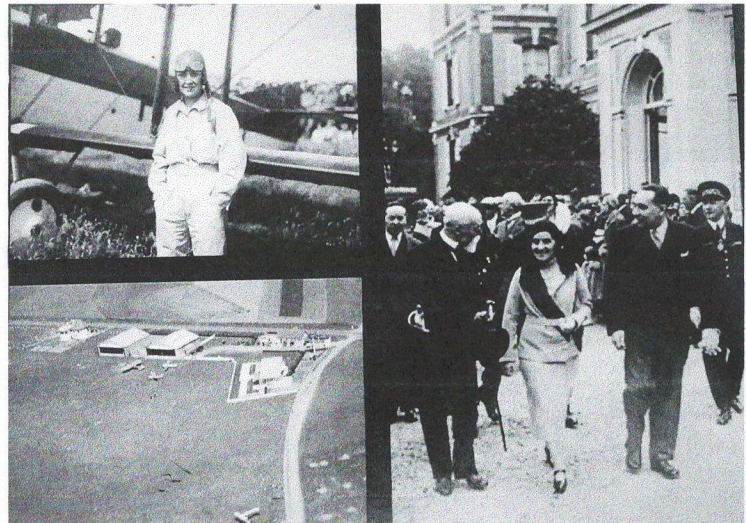


The first owner of this 8 litre Hispano Suiza was the famous Frenchwoman Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe, chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur. She was the daughter of Henry Deutsch de la Meurthe, also a chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, who owned Jupiter Oil (later Shell France) with his brother Emile, and was the co-founder of both the Automobile Club de France with the Count de Dion and the Aero Club de France with others including Gustav Eiffel. He sponsored the prize for the first flight around the Eiffel Tower from St. Cloud, won by famous aviator Santos Dumont in a dirigible, as photographed at right.

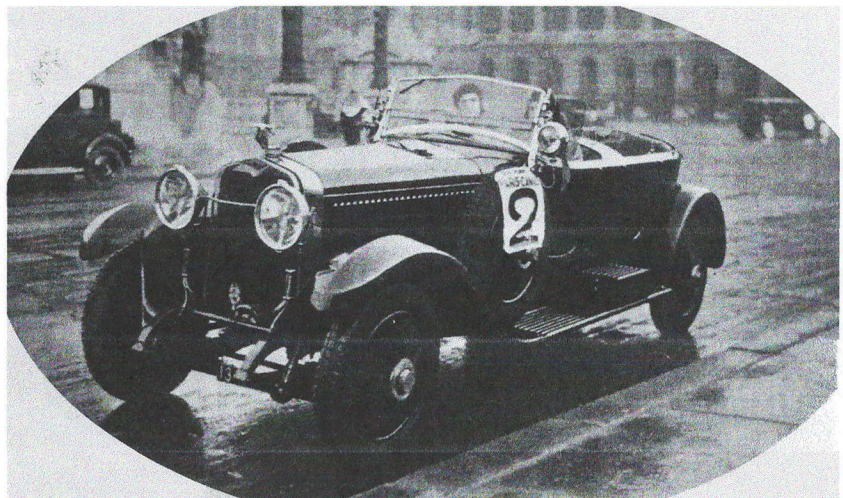
Henry Deutsch de la Meurthe

Suzanne herself was very active in rebuilding France after the First World War, became a famous aviator, was President of the Aero Club de France, sponsored the Coupe Deutsch aviation race, funded the research that developed the delta wing for aeroplanes, and turned her chateau into a foundation for injured pilots which still exists. Her premature death in 1937 was reported as far away as The New York Times.

Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe

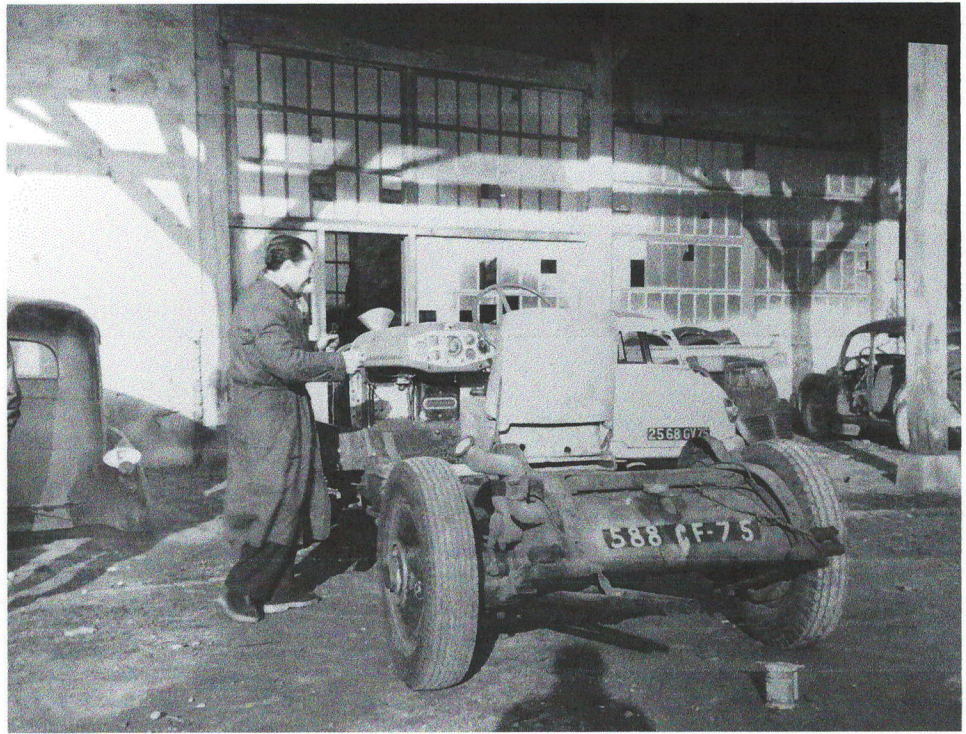


Her H6C Hispano was originally fitted with a very sporting open skiff body by Labourdette, the celebrated French coach builder, which came from an earlier Hispano H6B also owned by Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe. She entered her new H6C in competitions, including the all female Paris-Cannes Rally in 1930, as pictured below with Suzanne at the wheel.



Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe driving her H6C in the 1930 Paris-Cannes Rally

The car's second owner, the banker Paul Guilbert, re-bodied the car as a Town Car with coachwork by Binder, with the unusual feature of a very small driver's seat placed far forward of the usual position as his chauffeur was a dwarf ! This body had deteriorated by the 1950s, when it was found and bought by the famous journalist Jabby Crombac. The car was complete as shown in the photograph at right, and the Binder body might be the one on the left of the photograph.



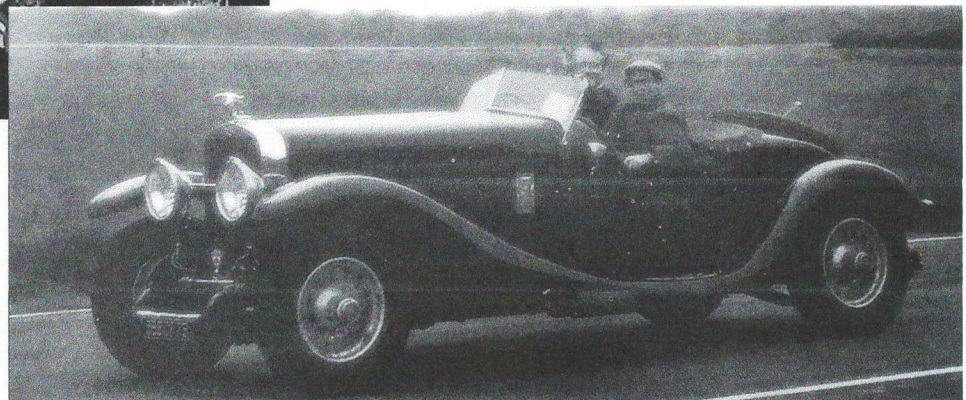
Louis Rossigneux with chassis 12400 in the 1950s



Above: Crombac with Colin Chapman and Jimmy Clark.

Jabby Crombac, born into a wealthy Swiss family, was the most famous Formula 1 reporter of the 1950s and 1960s. He was a member of Raymond Sommer's F1 team, worked with Gregor Grant in founding Autosport Magazine in Britain before founding Sport-Auto magazine in France, which remains that country's leading motor racing magazine. He was also close friends with Colin Chapman, founder of Lotus, and Lotus Formula 1 drivers and world champions Jimmy Clark and Graham Hill. The photograph at right shows him with Chapman and Clark, who both drove Crombac's Hispano on the Lotus test track and on the road.

Right: Crombac and Chapman testing chassis 12400 at the Lotus test track at Hethel.



Crombac restored the car as a 'sports' car to the specifications of the extremely rare short wheelbase 'Monza' competition model produced by the Hispano factory for racing at the Italian track and Indianapolis. He was advised by John Bolster, the famous BBC motor sports commentator and builder of ultra-fast hillclimb competition specials, and by Louis Rossigneux, a former engineer at the Hispano factory and manager of the French service arm of Hispano Suiza after the parent company folded in the late 1930s.

None of the original Monza racing cars exist, but with the help of Rossigneux original Hispano competition department parts were obtained, including a shortened propshaft as fitted to the factory Monzas, likely a spare left over from the original competition programme as the 'Monzas' were the only cars fitted with this propshaft. Rossigneux also fitted a competition camshaft, higher ratio back axle, and carried out other performance modifications. The result is a car capable of a top speed of 120MPH (200 kph) !

The photo at right shows the 'Monza' modifications to Hispano chassis 12400 prior to fitting its new body with the twin spare tyres mounted in the back. Crombac sold the car in the 1970s, and it was sold at auction in 1991 to its current owner of over 25 years, Tom Walduck.

The engine was rebuilt in 1991-92 by Kerry McSwan with the help of the Rolls Royce factory. It has run the Mille Miglia twice, and all owners of the car are known from new.

