

# BOOK REVIEWS

“**Nordic Bugatti Register 2014**” by Lennart Haajanen, Ole Kristian Haugen, Per Henricsson, Per-Olof Håkanson, Per Hörlén, Frank Studstrup and Bo Söderberg. Published by Bugattisektionen of Automobilhistoriska Klubben, Tackjärnsvägen 2, SE-168 68 Bromma, SWEDEN. Hardback with dustjacket. 11¼ x 8½ ins. 234 pages. Illustrated throughout with period and contemporary photographs in b & w and colour.

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The international Bugatti community seem to have arrived at an agreed format for Bugatti Registers without having actually formalised that agreement and this has resulted in most recent Registers feeling familiar as soon as they are opened. This familiarity clearly makes it easier to find information about a particular Bugatti and that is, after all, the function of all Bugatti Registers. This latest, and incidentally the first, Nordic Register follows the ‘standard’ pattern and the result is a well produced and very useful addition to the genre. After the Foreword, Definitions and details of the system of references used, again ‘standardised’ amongst Registers, there is a very necessary disclaimer, carefully worded to avoid any financial implications for the authors or the Club. The book then moves into the Register itself, each page being devoted to one car and the pages arranged in model order starting with 8 valve cars and finishing with the Peugeot Bébé. Each of these car specific pages includes details such as the chassis and engine numbers, the date the car was produced, who it was invoiced to, the present owner and any former owners. Each car is illustrated by up to four period and contemporary photographs placed in a column on the right hand side of the page and beside these there is a history of the car. At the bottom of each page is a list of references, detailing mentions in previous Registers, and a list of sources for the information provided. All this shows what a thorough job the authors have done; obviously there will information that has not been discovered and the hope is that the publication of the Register will bring forth new information for inclusion in a future edition.

The cars covered have all, at one time, been owned by an individual from Norway, Sweden, Finland or Denmark. As far as is known, no Bugatti has ever been owned by persons in the other Nordic countries or autonomous territories including Iceland, the Faroes and Greenland. Fortunately, for many readers of



Bugantics anyway, the authors chose to publish this work in the ‘international Bugatti language’, English, and this probably means that it reaches the widest possible audience.

Getting into the 200 ‘register’ pages there is so much information but also fascinating stories of how Bugattis were used and treated; 4696, an unblown Type 35, was bought, from the UK, by Eugen Björnstad with the intention of ice-racing with it. Preparation for racing in temperatures of 25°C below freezing consisted of wrapping the sump in felt mats, blocking the ends of the oil cooling tubes with bottle corks, partially covering the radiator and pouring in hot water before starting the engine. 4696 did not survive this treatment for long and a major blow up resulted from the owner and his mechanic using ice water to fill the radiator and then starting the frozen engine. Björnstad had been disappointed when his car arrived from England that it was supercharged and, following this mechanical disaster, he took the car all the way to Paris, for repair, and managed to persuade his parents that it should be part exchanged against a supercharged Type 35. 4696 returned to England and passed through several hands, including Esson-Scott, before ending up with Jack Lemon Burton who probably broke it for spares.

Touring cars are fairly treated and equally well researched and documented. An interesting example is 38428, originally supplied via Colonel Sorrel to New Zealand. Fitted with a two seater Roadster body the car survived in this form until the 1950s before being shortened and fitted with a Ford V8 engine. Fortunately the major components survived and were reunited in the 1970s. After a protracted restoration, spanning three owners, the car was rebuilt and displayed in the Bugatti Trust. It is one of few cars that originally had open bodywork but has since been rebodied as a closed car and now carries a replica Fiacre body. One of Ettore’s favourite styles, the fiacre is still popular on touring Bugattis and several have been rebodied thus although less than the Type 57s that now carry replica Atlantic coachwork and several are included in this Register.

The only Type 50 that seems to have resided in the Nordic countries is 50116. Having started life as a Fiacre coupé with Lord Cholmondeley it has suffered several body changes while passing through the hands of eighteen owners and ending up in the United States. Some might feel that the original body was more attractive than any of the subsequent incarnations but sadly that is one example of a craftsman’s art that is lost forever.

An interesting section, for future historians, details all of the Atlantic replicas built in Denmark by Erik Koux. These are built on replica frames with a variety of powerplants, including some genuine Bugatti engines and gearboxes, with the early cars clad in fibreglass replicas of the Pope Atlantic, 57591, which was used to make the moulds. Later cars were fitted with replica coachwork crafted in aluminium. A total of twelve of these cars have been built by Koux who has made no secret of their origins or status as replicas although it is slightly unfortunate that many original, Molsheim parts have been used that could have been better employed as spares for genuine cars.

In conclusion this is an excellent book of its type, highly detailed and clearly produced to a high standard using good quality paper and a robust looking binding which should withstand the many years of use that it will undoubtedly receive. Highly recommended.