



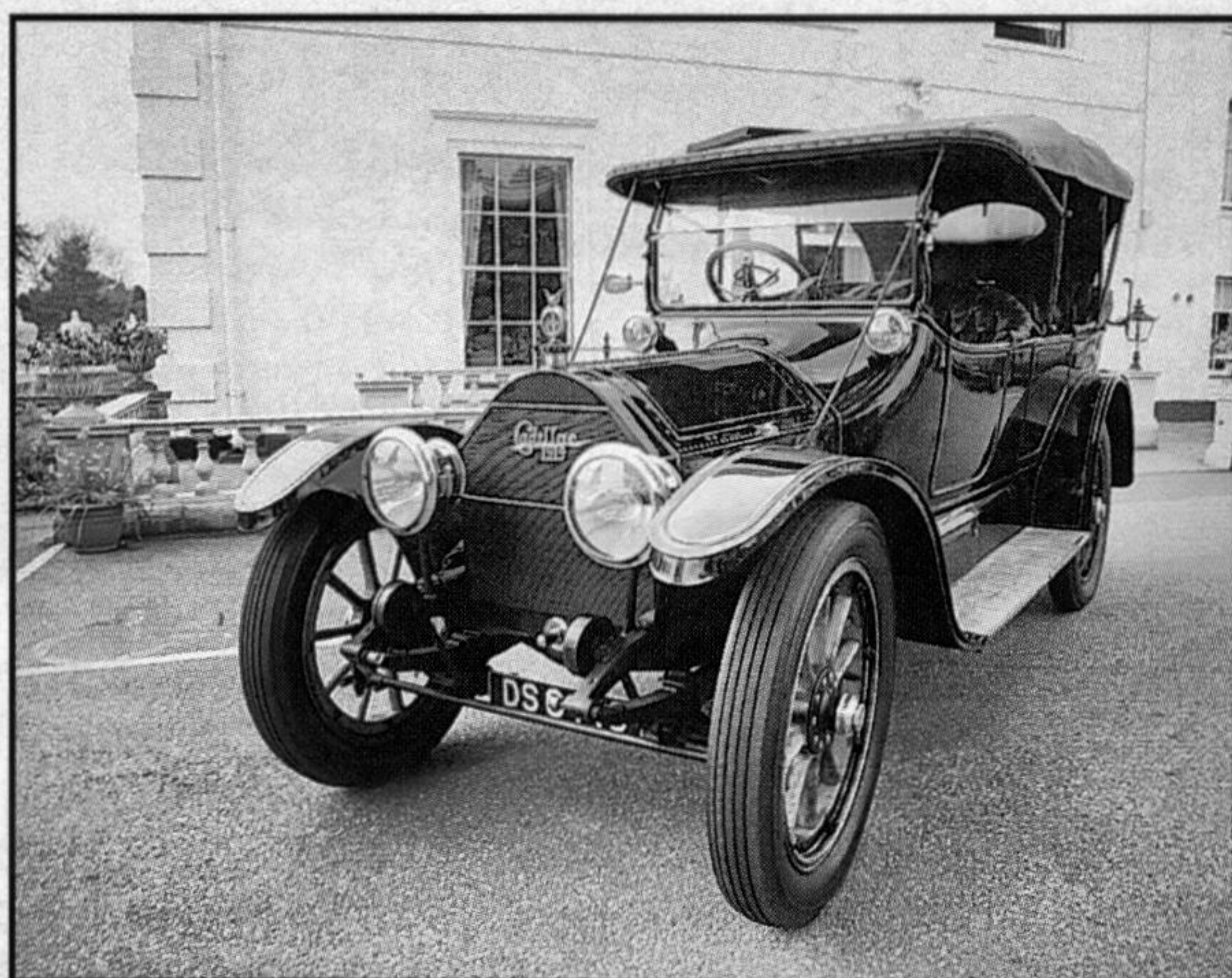
LEFT: THE CADILLAC IS A TREMENDOUSLY TALL AND IMPOSING VEHICLE, OVER EIGHT FEET TO THE TOP OF THE ROOF. NOTE THE RIGHT-HAND DRIVE LAYOUT. **RIGHT:** THE SIX-LITRE FOUR-CYLINDER ENGINE PROVIDES ENOUGH TORQUE FOR VERY RELAXED CRUISING. CADILLAC WERE WELL-KNOWN FOR THEIR INCREDIBLY ACCURATE MACHINING AND TOLERANCES, MEANING THAT EVEN A MASS-PRODUCED ENGINE LIKE THIS COULD SOLDIER ON FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MILES



operate by means of an inertia reel cord which ratchets the damper up and down, according to load – a fairly primitive idea which works quite well. One extremely innovative feature is the collapsible steering wheel which folds down almost to the vertical to allow even better access to the front seats, in conjunction with the spring-loaded driver's seat squab folding upwards.

Most appropriately Ken's 1914 Cadillac is housed in a timber framed roof garage that is 100 years old, but it was now time to get the car out and experience veteran motoring Cadillac style! First job is to turn on the petrol tap located on the offside of the block. There is an ignition Yale lock key (which effectively is used just to lock the switchgear, rather than to start the car) which is turned to the left to unlock the switches. Then there is a fuel primer which is pumped to pressurise the system (about 1.5lbs on the gauge) to bring fuel up to the updraught carburettor.

There is also a floor-mounted control which can be used on very cold days to operate a heater coil in the carburettor to ease starting. The manual choke located on the steering column is then pulled right up, then simply press the starter button which sets the dynastart (combined starter and dynamo) going over on low tension, then dip the clutch pedal which then switches over to a solenoid to HT and with a bit of luck the engine will thunder into life! It may only be four cylinders but its six litres sounds very powerful with a deep rumble. Once the engine is running the choke can then be let down to about half way and the revs can be adjusted via a hand throttle located on the steering wheel. Ken points out that due to modern petrols the advance-retard mechanism needs to be on full advance all the time.



Okay, so now we are up and running, it's time to venture out into the modern traffic flow in the suburbs of north-west London! This was definitely not the sort of environment to take to the wheel in a car that demands a fair amount of familiarity and dexterity to drive properly, so Ken displayed his driving skills and explained the idiosyncrasies of gear selection – The three-speed transmission has a floor-mounted gate shift located on the right with an additional electric selector mounted on the top of the door with the connections located vertically in the door hinge.

The electric selector has two positions with each position having a double setting. If you want to select the upper range of gears, you bring the switch back into the upper range, but nothing happens until you depress the clutch to engage the gear. However when you dip the clutch to change gear via the manual shift it won't change on the electric shift.

To make it change on the electric shift you have to have your thumb on the switch, so not only has the switch got to be in the required position but it has to be on the spring loading as well, so that it knows when you dip the clutch pedal to operate the solenoid. Got it?! Basically it's all about changing from high to low ratios on all three gears and

reverse, with the rear axle having a double ratio selector in the differential. The shaft drive terminates in a universal joint with a tapered connection into the two-speed section which has engage and disengage solenoids.

Well, having now mastered the complexities of the manual/electric gear ratios, it becomes immediately apparent that this car's turning circle is extremely limited, with large amounts of physical input required for turning, especially at low speeds! Perfect road positioning for turning in and out of junctions suddenly takes on a whole new meaning. What was impressive is this car's turn of speed in top gear with high ratio. Published figures on maximum speed at 1400rpm with the 2.5:1 ratio rear axle work out at 60mph, but Ken reckons he has eclipsed this by a long chalk in his car! 'Because you are sitting so high up it's not always obvious quite how fast you can be travelling,' he grins.

However, it's not advisable to have the soft top up at high speeds; it can easily get damaged due to its relative lack of rigidity. There is a Warner digital speedo and mileometer located on the far left of the dash. Since Ken has owned the car he has clocked up over 4000 miles and says it has proved to be incredibly reliable and he derives enormous pleasure from driving it. 'Compared with a modern car it's a totally different driving experience, but tremendous fun!'

The deep button-backed leather seats certainly proved to be very comfortable. 'The only down side,' he continues, 'is that if anything goes wrong or breaks, spares are like hens' teeth and you just have to have parts made. It helps to know a good machine shop.' Well, thank goodness there are people like Ken still keeping these rolling pieces of history on the road – happy 100th, Cadillac! ■

