



# B. S. CUNNINGHAM COMPANY

*Competition Motor Cars*

1402 ELIZABETH AVENUE  
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

April 20, 1953

Mr. Stan Sedgwick  
The Cobb  
Stoke Close  
Cobham, Surrey  
England

Dear Stan:

We are all delighted that you have accepted the job of directing our pit at Le Mans. I personally want to thank you for taking on a responsibility you could have so easily refused. We certainly were in need of a pit manager and I am sure you are just the man for the job. Good luck --SEDGBAUER.

Briggs has asked me to pass on my comments and answer certain questions pertaining to your recent letter. I will assume that you have a sort of secondary interest in life which enables you to "bring home the bacon" and this is why you will not arrive in Le Mans until the afternoon of June 11th. However, if you could possibly arrange to arrive at Le Mans at least by the afternoon of the 10th I feel it would be decidedly beneficial. Jack has made a list of things he would like to do to the cars just before the race and the time involved dictates that we not attend practice the third night. Aside from this, the more time you can spend with us prior to "race eve", the better we should have things planned and organized. As a driver I know that the closer to race time, the less I can concentrate on anything but my particular job in the race. This condition undoubtedly exists throughout the Racing Team.

Drivers & Mechanics:

As you know, we are racing three cars. The assignment of drivers and mechanics is tentatively arranged as follows.

<u>Car #</u>	<u>Car</u>	<u>Body Type</u>	<u>Year</u> <u>Mfgd.</u>	<u>1st Driver</u>	<u>2nd Driver</u>	<u>1st Mechanic</u>	<u>2nd Mechanic</u>
1	C-4R	Roadster	1952	Cunningham	Spear	Donaldson, Jr.	Horn
2	C-5R	Roadster	1953	Walters	Fitch	Sherman	Bourgnon
3	C-4RK	Coupe	1952	Moran	Bennett	Momo	Blake

We will have a fourth car, a C-4R Roadster for practice. This car will be properly prepared to race at Le Mans in the event the new C-5 has any unforeseen "bugs".

Charles Moran is purchasing the C-4RK Coupe after the Le Mans race on the condition that he drive the car as one of the Team at Le Mans. Charlie is a good friend of Briggs' and is one of the finest fellows I have ever met, but I am not expecting any support from him as a driver. In other words, unless I am greatly mistaken, you have a two car team - and Charlie.

#### Race Cars:

The C-4R's have been greatly improved since their last appearance at Le Mans. I think we have them really reliable. They are also a little bit lighter and have a little more power. We now have them equipped with reasonably good brakes as well as a four speed transmission. The new C-5R employs the same engine and "drive line" and therefore should be equally reliable as far as these major assemblies are concerned. She has an entirely new brake, front suspension, chassis, and body. We are hoping it will be a little lighter than the C-4R. Unfortunately she will not be completed for testing until May 1st.

The C-5 should be capable of a better "all-out" lap time than the C-4, however there is very little reason to believe it would have a much higher cruising speed considering a 24 hour race. This can be more finally determined in practice.

#### Forecasting for 1953:

We must have purchased our crystal ball at the same shop. Mine also forecasts the lap record at 4'30" and a necessary daylight cruising speed of 4'50". Here again we can only determine in practice if it is practical to cruise at 4'50". I don't have any serious suspicion that we can't but I feel it wise to make our final plans after practice.

#### Last Year's driving:

Last year Fitch and I were cruising above the speed at which our engine can be considered reliable for 24 hours. Especially Fitch. Top Chrysler Engineers were in attendance

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when we disassembled our Le Mans engines and this was their comment. Also, the brake lining on Fitch's car was considerably more than half worn, in a little more than four hours of racing. Even if the engine had stayed running, he would have run completely out of brakes.

I don't think there is any doubt that Fitch and I were disappointed over the brake difficulties that turned up during practice and this had everything to do with the manner in which we selected to drive. You may remember, at the drivers' meeting we agreed that in view of our lack in the brake department we would compensate by upping our limits in other departments.

In looking back, it becomes rather obvious that we should have run a little easier. One of us should have finished third! Here's hoping our new crystal balls are good ones.

#### Night Speed:

The amount of drop in night speed is to quite an extent relative to two things; the amount under the car's maximum it is cruising the race, and straightaway speed in relation to acceleration and braking abilities.

Levegh's car had better acceleration than any car on the course up to 125 mph. The Talbot's are also known for their excellent brakes. However, Levegh was cruising on the main straight at least 15 mph slower than the ten fastest cars. I think this accounts for his being the fastest night driver. I feel that, weather being good, the night drop is about 90% chargeable to the necessity of "backing off" sooner from top cruising speeds on the fast straights. I think our car can be classed as having a very high straight-away speed and quite good acceleration. I think a five second drop is just a little on the stingy side and I don't think this can be too easily determined in practice. I'll let you know some time after I take the wheel during my second tour.

#### Pit Work:

No one knows better than I that our pit work can stand improvement. Incidentally, Briggs seems to be the worst offender. Guess we'll have to give the boss Hell!

Our team of mechanics is now made up of an excellent group and at most of the races this past season we have practiced by operating the pit in strict accordance with Le Mans rules. I'm sure you will find our pit work better. For obvious reasons, I would like to spend a few hours practicing pit stops during a night practice period with you present.

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Fuel Capacity and Mileage:

Fuel Tank capacity is as follows:

<u>Car #</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Main Tanks</u>	<u>Reserve Tank</u>
1	C-4R	60.5 gals	3.5 gals
2	C-5R	51.0 gals	2.5 gals
3	C-4RK	52.0 gals	3.5 gals

The C-4RK, which I drove last year, got exactly 6.5 miles per gallon during the first 40 laps. I think this is a reasonable figure to use in estimating mileage on Car #2. I would estimate Car #1 will get three more miles per gallon, while Briggs is driving, and one or two more miles per gallon while Spear is driving.

Radio:

We are not planning on using radio.

I guess this information will keep you busy for awhile. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

With kindest personal regards to both Mrs. Sedgwick and yourself.

Sincerely,

*Phil*  
Phil

PFWalters/rm  
Enc.

<u>Car</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Mpg</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Laps</u>	<u>Galls per Lap</u>	<u>Reserve Laps</u>	
1	60.5	8.0	483.5	484	$50\frac{1}{2} \div 27\frac{1}{2}$	1.1	3
2	51.0	6.5	331.5		39 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.3	2
3	52.0	7	364.0		43 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.2	2
Minimum No. of Pit Stops (on basis of 206 (2) laps)					270 (1)	279 (3)	
		C	1	5	=	6 Primary galls	
			2	7	=	8 " "	
			3	6	=	7 " "	