

FAMOUS BRITISH TEST HILLS

USED for the first time in last year's London-Land's End trial of the M.C.C., and christened at the time Gooseham, Darracott Hill is quite a newcomer among trials acclivities. With its sharp corners, its stiffening gradient and muddy surface it is definitely to be treated with respect, particularly as it again figures in the "Land's End" route this Easter.

Anyone approaching the hill for the first time, with the idea of having a look at it, would follow the main road from Bideford (in North Devon) to Bude, the popular seaside resort in North Cornwall. After passing the turning to Clovelly on the right, A39 is followed past Boxworthy Corner and West Country Inn as far as a fairly important cross-roads going from Meddon to Welcombe. This is the road by which competitors rejoin A39 after climbing Gooseham, and the hill can be descended if the road is followed in a westerly

No. 6. DARRACOTT (née Gooseham)

direction, forking left for Darracott and at this hamlet turning left again for the village of Gooseham.

The alternative is to continue over the Meddon-Welcombe cross-roads, taking the second turn on the right, which leads down through Wooley to Gooseham. Here one should turn northward towards Welcombe, first descending the *real* Gooseham Hill, which is fairly steep. At the bottom is a farmyard, out of which rises Darracott.

By H. E. SYMONS

The hill begins with a modest τ in 8 or so and the first corner, to the left, is not very acute. This is followed by a right-hand bend with a gradient of perhaps τ in $4\frac{1}{2}$, and the hill, winding up through a wood, gradually steepens until the *pièce de résistance*—a very acute left-hand corner—is reached. This has a slimy,

muddy surface, calling for skilful handling, and the gradient is commonly reputed to measure τ in $3\frac{1}{2}$. There is, moreover, an unpleasant drop on the right-hand side of the road. Finally we encounter an attractive little village in a valley (this, so far as I can remember, is Welcombe) and on reaching a chapel the turning to the right should be taken, when the main road, A39, is joined once again. Care should be taken at this point to turn *right*, and during the actual trial competitors approaching Darracott Hill and those leaving it will for a short distance travel side by side in the same direction.

The usual mud-driving tactics will apply on this hill; in other words, the gear judged most suitable for a fast climb (probably 1st speed) should be engaged and the throttle kept as far as possible steady. The tyres should be let well down and the shock absorbers tightened as much as possible if wheelspin is to be avoided.