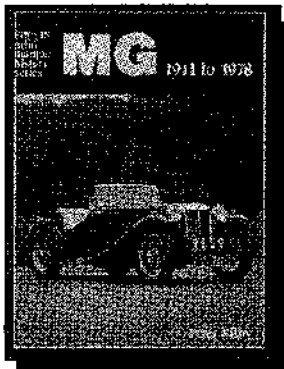
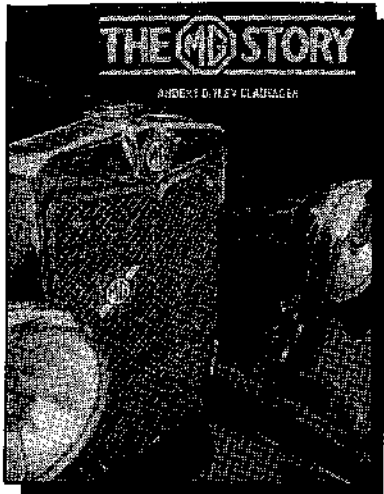


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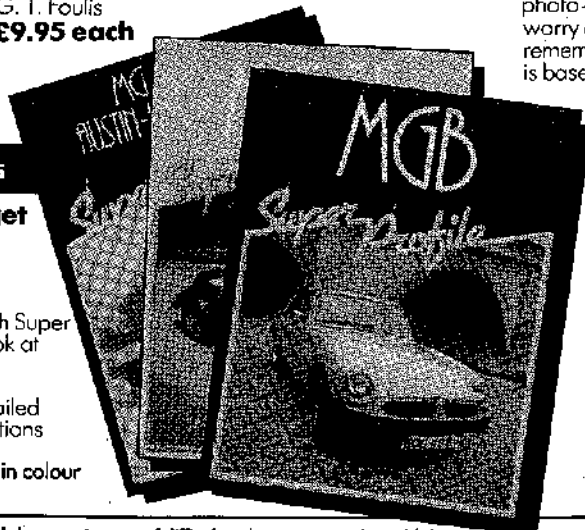
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Q.E.D.

Driving back from Germany in an Audi 90 quattro, Eurohack Kevin Blick considered the real need for four-wheel-drive in a family saloon. After several hundred miles he was just about convinced. QED, case proved



CLICSTOP SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

RAIN CRASHED down as if the sky had burst its seams. It lay in deadly lakes across the worn tarmac of the Belgian *autoroute*, or was whipped into fountains of blinding mist by whirling truck wheels.

Calais was still 200 miles away and the ferry due to sail in less than four hours. What had always looked like a long, hard, fast chase back over nearly 500 miles from mid-Germany was starting to ebb away into frustration and anti-climax.

Was there still time? Might we just make it? It was the ideal scenario for an accident. Home-ward bound, conditions deteriorating, time slipping by, trying to press on.

And then the truck pulled out. With one derisory wink of his indicator, a Belgian juggernaut barred our way on the two-lane *autoroute* like a night club bouncer. Lights scarcely visible through the mountain of spray, he was there and barely a couple of trailers' lengths in front. I was

going 60mph faster than his lumbering stride and the gap was closing fast.

Instinct took over: I hit the brake hard, knowing almost as I did so that the rivers of water flowing across the road would send the Audi aquaplaning. The car twitched slightly; the pedal kicked back at my foot - the ABS anti-lock brains had sensed the momentary aquaplane too. A couple of hard cadence brakes and we were safely slowed behind the truck - still unknowing or uncaring of our presence.

It was the first time - the only time thankfully - in four days and nearly 2,000 miles driving that the three of us in the car had cause seriously to be grateful for the benefits of Audi's quattro technology.

Perhaps a rear-drive car with ABS would have coped as well? Perhaps a front-drive car could have been slowed safely by some rapid cadence braking? Who knows - but in the rare moment of danger when instinct often over-rides rational action, it is nice to have the car as far as possible on your side.

I have to confess that the Audi

90 quattro wasn't my first choice for a trip round Germany's Porsche pruners and Mercedes merchandisers.

Various bigger, faster and more luxurious saloons came to mind - but none, save the Audi, was available. I can't imagine that the 90q would be many buyers' instinctive first choice, either. It may be pretty looking but it is scarcely an eye-catcher - even with the body add-ons that distinguish a 90 from a humble 80. And, more important, it's pretty expensive, too: £13,492 to start with - then £1,282 for ABS brakes which anyone keen enough to want to exploit four-wheel-drive traction is almost sure to feel a necessary fitment. For £15,000 on the road you can demand a lot of motor car!

But the high tech spec might move the 90 quattro up from the bottom of some shopping lists to the top. It is powered by a 136bhp Bosch-injected version of Audi's five-cylinder 2.2 engine and has the 'standard' quattro transmission system, splitting torque 50/50 between