

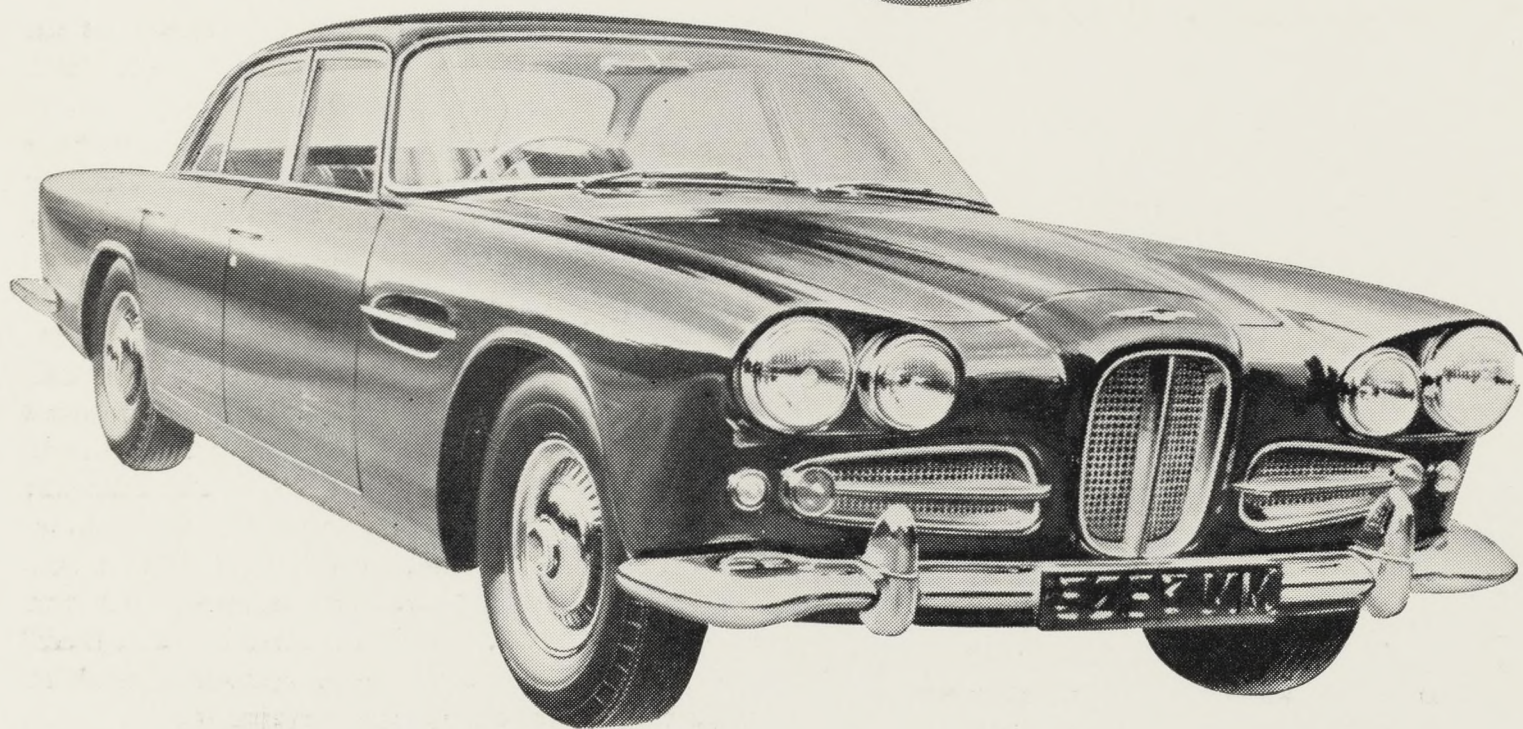
THE *Lagonda*

No. 47 Spring 1964



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Once again



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EDITORIAL

I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED! AS SOON AS I HAD written in my last Editorial that we were achieving regular appearances of the Magazine, we ran into production difficulties. These resulted in the Winter Issue appearing after Christmas instead of before. Apologies are proffered for the lateness.

In this issue I have included a reprint of an article which first appeared in *Speed* in July 1935. It is the contemporary report on the Le Mans race of that year which, of course, was won by a Lagonda entered by Arthur Fox. This same car is now owned by Jack Kibble. Harry Gostling was kind enough to lend me his mint copies of early issues of *Speed* which made this reprint possible. Browsing through these proved extremely interesting. Famous names and incidents abound . . . Nuvolari beating the combined might of the Mercedes and Auto-Union teams with an out-dated Alfa-Romeo in the German G.P. . . . John Cobb capturing the Brooklands lap record in a Napier-Railton at 143 m.p.h. . . . Sir Malcolm Campbell becoming the first man to reach 300 m.p.h. on land in "Bluebird" . . . Raymond Mays breaking records at Shelsley Walsh . . . Freddie Dixon winning the T.T. . . and so on. Great stuff!

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NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are all glad to hear that our Chairman, JAMES CROCKER, is now out and about again after a spell in hospital. Reports indicate that he has shed some surplus weight—whether on doctor's advice or because the light-weight Rapier he is building demands it we do not know. We look forward to his early return to the Club's activities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRITZ BLAESER writes to us from Vereeniging in South Africa and tells of his LG45 which he has nearly finished restoring. Two years' work has gone into this labour of love. To prove that he is capable of even more mammoth tasks he is negotiating the purchase of a 1924 Dennis Fire Engine! He intends using this on rallies, which news has delighted his children. Fritz neglects to mention what his wife thinks about this project

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

To show that some people at least made an effort to get to the last A.G.M., BERNARD RAINE left Silverdale in Lancashire at 8 a.m. in order to be at Overstone by lunchtime. Travelling in a friend's Lagonda good progress was made until the Doncaster By-pass was reached when a clatter from the engine room brought them to a hasty halt. Bad luck—a big-end run. Turning on their tracks they made their way carefully home. On reaching Barwick they decided to leave the Lagonda at Ted Townsley's. Bernard's friend telephoned home and persuaded his wife to motor down to them in their VW. Wife promptly arrived complete with junior but then she realised that the all-important nappies had been left behind.

No option but for the whole contingent to return home which they did by 12 noon. Bernard and friend regarded this as just a temporary setback and having dumped the family turned southwards again for Overstone! Flat-out motor-ing and the A.G.M. was reached three hours and ten minutes and 160 miles later. Well done!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Overseas member D. R. VANNER in far-away Peru writes and regrets that there are no Lagondas in the land of the Incas. He is, in a way, glad there are none as the Peruvian, he tells us, has strange ideas when it comes to servicing a motor

car. Anything that is not functioning is promptly ripped off! Mr. Vanner has spotted a 1928 SJ Duesenburg and a 1923 Lincoln out there . . . let's hope they are in good hands.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ARNOLD DAVY is planning a Spring Social which will introduce members to some of the lesser-known lanes and by-ways of Hertfordshire. The date is Sunday, 19th April and Arnold will be glad to hear from intending competitors.

Similarly a Spring Social Rally is taking place in the Lancashire area on the same day. At the time of writing these Notes it is not certain who is lumbered with the organisation of this event but no doubt HERB SCHOFIELD can supply details.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The front cover design of this issue is by MIKE GABER and the car shown is the M45 Team Car. This car is now owned by American member Burnie Calkins.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Sunday 19th April . . .

Spring Social (Herts)

Starting Point—Red Lion, Hatfield

Sunday 19th April . . .

Spring Social (Lancs)

Sunday 17th May . . .

Yorkshire Treasure Hunt

Sunday 24th May . . .

**Southern Driving Tests
(Brackley)**

Sunday 14th June . . .

Border Rally

Contributions do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee nor of the Editor, and expressed opinions are personal to contributors.



"Superb Craftsmanship be damned! They're simply slung together!"

MIDLAND NOTES

by Charles Green

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN HAS RECENTLY HONOURED one of our Midland members. It is with very great pleasure that we congratulate Ernest J. D. Warrilow of Stoke-on-Trent on his being made a Member of the British Empire.

Author, antiquarian, photographer and messer about amongst old motor cars, Ernest can fairly be described as a man of parts. He is retiring by nature and will be livid when he reads this. However, we are proud of you Ernest, not only for your achievements in the historical and sociological field, but for your modest approach to everything, setting an example which is entirely appropriate in our Club.

At the January meeting of the Midland Section at the Cock Inn, Stableford, no less than sixty-five owners of vintage cars gathered to watch three films from the Shell History of Motor Racing. These were introduced by Midland Secretary and ran for about two hours, with suitable intervals for liquid nourishment which

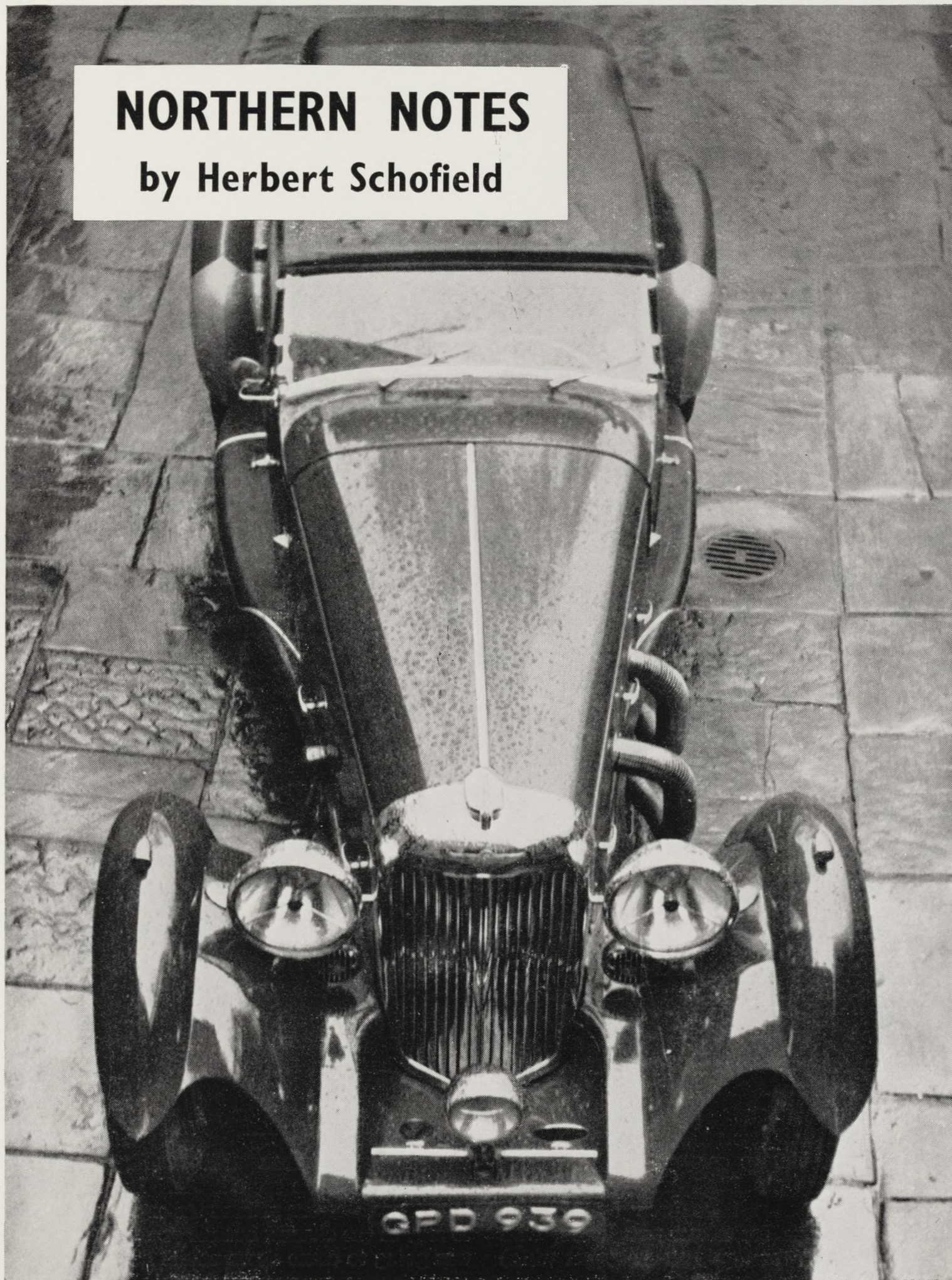
was available in the room by kind permission of our new host Mr. Jones. A vote of thanks to the projectionist was proposed by Gordon Warren-Smith, who had called in on his way from Shrewsbury to Leamington Spa in his handsome 3-litre saloon. Isn't it funny how some members seem to be able to arrange to be "just passing through" on the night. Reminds me of the night Martyn Sowerbutts went back to Cambridge, via Stoke-on-Trent!

We were more than pleased to see the party of Mancunians who came, saw, and concurred. Hope you will all come again.

Gordon Warren-Smith told a nice story against himself which concerned a decision to remove the engine from his 3-litre. Having slung a rope round it, and hitched the rope to a block-and-tackle hanging from the roof of his garage he pulled in the usual way. Nothing happened, so he pulled some more. Still nothing happened, so he pulled some more again. It was quite a long time before he realised the engine was going to stay in the chassis, but the roof of the garage was going to come down round his ears!

NORTHERN NOTES

by Herbert Schofield



JANUARY IS THE OFF-SEASON AS FAR AS VINTAGE motoring is concerned and we rely on our regular monthly Pub Meetings to keep the spirit alive. Unfortunately the weather is not always kind at this time of year and even these meetings are sometimes sparsely attended. A roaring coal fire and the music of Beethoven almost kept the Northern Secretary at home for the January Meeting. However, once the old car had by devious means been persuaded to start, and reversed out of the smoke-filled garage, not even the dandruff removing blast of cold air coming over the windscreen could spoil the pleasure of experiencing once again that special something that only ancient thoroughbred motor cars can give; yards of bonnet in front of you, the dull green glow of the instruments informing you that all is not well, and your own small world of thumping clattering machinery is pleasurable indeed as you speed or grope (depending on the state of your headlamp reflectors) along quiet country roads for a monthly natter about 2-litres, G9 gearboxes and water-pumps.

Seriously, winter motoring especially at night can be very enjoyable—even in an open car. The roads are comparatively quiet and mercifully empty of the summer-only motorist, and even Fred the Ted, the local dicer, is probably taking advantage of the dark in a quiet spot, enjoying other forms of sport!

This is the time of year when most other road users definitely regard the vintage motorist as being a bit of a crank. Possibly they are justified, for who in his right mind would invest one or two hundreds of pounds on an old crock to suffer the discomforts of being rained and blown upon—even laughed at, when, for the same amount of cash could be purchased a late fifties Ford or Vauxhall suffering only a moderate degree of rust attack?

Vintage and Post-vintage classics certainly do have many drawbacks on modern day traffic conditions, but there are far outweighed by the pleasure in owning something very genuine, and with regard to thoroughbred cars a craftsman-built piece of machinery of handsome appearance. This I suppose is why we own Lagondas. The 2-litre is most attractive, and in the big car class, has any car surpassed even today the elegance and beauty of an LG6 or V-12 Drop Head Coupe?

The only Northern 'event' which took place in

the Winter period was a small informal Party the Northern Secretary held at his home on November 30th. Something like 20 members from the Manchester area attended of which the twelve males managed to consume at a surprisingly respectable speed nine gallons of ale. As the evening wore on the conversation amongst the forementioned twelve gradually drifted, as one might expect, from motor-cars to subjects of a less printable nature!—all this being hastened by the unwelcome arrival of Dearden-Briggs. However despite this minor setback everyone I think had a jolly time.

You will now be in possession of your 1964 fixture cards. In the North our events follow fairly closely the 1963 pattern, but with the following exceptions. The Autumn Social on Sunday, September 6th, will be a purely social function, the emphasis being rather on a get-to-know-you basis and an enjoyable afternoon's picnicking in pleasant surroundings. The main attraction of the day however will be a Concours d'Elegance, to be held in two classes. One for Lagonda and Rapier cars and a separate class for other venerable marques which qualify as Vintage or Post-vintage Thoroughbreds. The Northern Secretary is presenting a small trophy to be given annually at prize-giving to the winner of the Lagonda class. There will also be an award to the winner of Class II, and awards for second places in both classes should the entry be large enough to justify this. Keep the date, September 6th, well noted in your diary for we would like to see at least 50 cars, and if you have a well-maintained Lagonda, enter it for the Concours.

The other alteration in the fixture list is the Autumn Social Rally for the Raines Cup, this will be held on Sunday, October 11th.

I see that Steed of that rather far-fetched Saturday night I.T.V. series "The Avengers", drives about in a 2-litre Lagonda. Makes the programme a little interesting to watch anyway.

To finish on a sad note. Joe Unsworth was involved in a crash, late November, with his supercharged 2-litre. Joe and wife sustained no damage to themselves; however the 2-litre did, and the front end and chassis were considerably damaged. All this is most regrettable as Joe was certainly not to blame, and it is hoped that the car will soon be back on the road as immaculate as before.

IT WAS A FAMOUS VICTORY! LE MANS 1935

Reprinted from *Speed*, July 1935 issue, by courtesy of *Motor Sport*.

SUPERLATIVE DRIVERS AT THE WHEELS of superlative cars are an asset, admittedly, in a long-distance road race; but this year at Le Mans, our own drivers and cars were raced with foreign competition of almost equal calibre.

What, then, was the factor which led to Great Britain's sensationally sweeping victory—in fact, her complete annihilation of her rivals? A slight superiority of driver, perhaps; a definite superiority of cars and organisation certainly: but above all, in our opinion, our national temperament.

Imagine setting forth on a 24-hour race, about seven hours of which *must* be completed in darkness, after the course has just been deluged by a torrential storm, with the almost certain expectancy of foul weather conditions throughout.

Surely no greater test of determination to triumph over discomfort and difficulty could be devised!

That the British contingent at Le Mans triumphed so completely in the face of such conditions, is no less tribute to the grit typical of the nation they represented, than it is to their own intrepidity and to the excellence of their cars.

Nevertheless, whilst justly congratulating our drivers and manufacturers on their success, let us not overlook the element of luck which (in fairness, one must admit) went far to make this success possible. Our sincere sympathy goes out to Helde and Stoffel whose Alfa-Romeo would almost certainly have won, had it not been for an inexcusable error on the part of the timekeepers or announcer.

Towards the end of the race, the winning Lagonda was running at reduced speed and was passed by Helde, whom the Lagonda drivers had displaced from the lead between nine and ten o'clock in the morning.

The loudspeakers announced that Helde was now back in the lead and British hopes suffered a terrible set-back. Accordingly, Helde was

signalled from his pit to slow down, which he did, and it was not until *one-and-a-half minutes* before the finish that the announcer casually corrected his previous statement, and pointed out that Helde actually was not in the lead at all, but lay one lap behind the British car.

By then, of course, all chance of Helde catching the Lagonda was dashed; whereas, had the previous wrong information not been broadcast, as a result of which his pit slowed him, the result might have been very different.

Undoubtedly, Helde deserves our sympathy and this we offer him sincerely, but with the one reservation, that his *own* pits timekeepers should have been sufficiently *au fait* with the position not to have been misled by the false announcement.

No fewer than fifty-eight cars were drawn up in echelon at the start at 4.0 p.m. on Saturday, June 15th, and so far down the road did the line of cars stretch, that three repeater flags had to be used to give the starting signal.

At the fall of the flag all got away, with the exception of two French cars which, however, were but momentarily delayed.

Hon. Brian Lewis, driving Earl Howe's 2.3 litre Alfa-Romeo led at the end of lap 1, closely followed by a pack of other competitors.

Later in the race (on its 29th lap, to be exact) this car put up the fastest lap of any car this year, at 86.75 m.p.h.

Not long after this start, however, Sommer (Alfa-Romeo) took the lead, as Lewis was forced into the pits with distributor trouble.

From this moment until shortly after 11.0 p.m., Sommer held on to the lead, but the British cars were forcing too hot a pace for him, and as a result the Alfa blew-up.

At this point the ultimate winner took the lead.

Arthur Fox's 4½-litre Lagonda which was being brilliantly driven by J. S. Hindmarsh, one of Great Britain's most experienced long-distance drivers and Luis Fontes, winner of the Jubilee Day International Trophy Race at Brooklands.

Lewis on the Alfa-Romeo now occupied fifth place, and it was shortly before this time that T. S. Fotheringham, co-driver with C. Penn-



Luis Fontes pulls into the Pits and reports that the oil pressure has gone.

Sporting Photos.

Hughes, on one of the Aston-Martins, had a crash from which he was lucky to escape with his life—bruised and shaken as he was.

It appears that Fotheringham had taken White House bend a shade too fast, with the result that his car slid, out of control, to the bank which it mounted, bouncing off across the road, where it overturned on top of the driver who, however, was fortunate enough to escape with comparatively slight injuries.

At about the time Fotheringham was involved in these hair-raising convolutions, S. H. Newsome shot off the road at Arnage without personal injury, but necessitating the retirement of his Riley.

Two other misfortunes overtook the Rileys during the race. One of these was when the car which Freddie Dixon and Cyril Paul were driving burst into flames at the pits and had to be withdrawn, and the other was shortly after 9 o'clock on Sunday morning, when the car which had been driven extremely fast throughout by Sebillieu and Delaroche and had always been prominently placed got into a broadside skid near Arnage and overturned—without injury to the driver.

The Lagonda was still leading at a few minutes before 2 a.m. on Sunday, when it developed trouble which forced it into the pits.

This stop cost Fox's car four places and the lead passed back to Earl Howe's Alfa-Romeo, followed in second place by the Veyron and Labric (Bugatti), with the Stoffel and Helde (Alfa-Romeo) third.

At dawn on Sunday, the weather showed signs of improving, but the road was still wet, and it was then that Elwes executed his tail-first slide after passing the Grand Stands, hitting the parapet and continuing broadside for a considerable distance.

Again the driver escaped unscathed, but the tail of his car was sadly crumpled, and had subsequently to be removed before the car could continue.

Earl Howe's Alfa-Romeo maintained the lead until, at about 5.30 a.m., a broken piston put it out of the race.

This let Helde up into the lead, but by this time Hindmarsh, on the Lagonda, had worked his way back into second place; meanwhile, Dr.

Benjafield's and Sir Ronald Gunter's Lagonda appeared in third place; but it did not occupy this position long as, between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. it dropped back to fifth position.

At 8 a.m. Helde still led Hindmarsh by a fraction over two minutes, but now a new British challenge was becoming material, the Aston-Martin of C. E. C. Martin and Charles Brackenbury coming up into third position.

At a few minutes before 10 a.m. the Lagonda passed the Alfa-Romeo to go up into the lead, the plucky little Aston-Martin was still third and going great guns, this car by now also having established a very considerable lead in the separate race, run simultaneously, for the Coupe Biennial.

As the results show, the order of the first three in the general classification at the end was the same as at 10 a.m., although right up to the last minute the ultimate issue was in doubt, as Fontes was making frequent pit-calls to report ever-dwindling oil-pressure, and each time he was told to proceed gingerly—a nerve-wracking experience at the end of a long-distance race, when the second car is right on one's tail.

Little mention has been made in the above notes of the progress of the Biennial Cup Race, as really, after an excellent start by the Singers, which, however, was not maintained owing to starter trouble at the pits, the Aston-Martins dominated this race; but it must be recorded that the Singer and Riley entries fought a pitched battle throughout for second place, the former ultimately beating their rivals to it by a figure of merit difference of only .02.

RESULTS

Winners of the Grand Prix d'Endurance and First in the General Classification:

Hindmarsh and Fontes (4½-litre Lagonda).
Distance 3,006.797 kiloms.

Average Speed, 125.283 k.p.h. (77.85 m.p.h.).

2. Helde and Stoffel (Alfa-Romeo), 2,998.308 kiloms. (77.37 m.p.h.).

3. C. E. C. Martin and C. Brackenbury (Aston-Martin), 2,905.576 kiloms, 121.065 k.p.h. (75.22 m.p.h.).

4. Van der Becke and C. Richardson (Riley), 2,811.880 kiloms, 117.45 k.p.h. (72.98 m.p.h.).



28 years later. Jack Kibble putting the M.45 through its paces at Silverstone.

Michael Cooper.



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DUNLOP ROAD SPEED RS5

CFH/H63/170

COMPETITION NOTES

1964—ELECTION YEAR. A YEAR OF GREAT EVENTS. You may or may not have a new Party in Power at Westminster by the time you read this but you have, without doubt, a new Competition Secretary in the Lagonda Club, who is going to do his best to make it a year of great events for the club.

In writing these, my first Competition Notes, I would like to thank Richard Hare for all the work that he has put into the club over quite a number of years. Many members will appreciate how much he has done in bringing the competition side of the club up to a very high standard, with a full and varied Fixture List each year. Your new broom, with far less well seasoned bristles, hopes to continue to sweep as clean as your older and well tried one.

Looking now to the season in front of us, there are one or two additions and alterations in the club calendar, from last year.

Yorkshire Treasure Hunt, Sunday, May 17th, organised by Herbert Schofield, will just get the Northern members in fighting trim for the Southern Rally a week later.

Southern Rally. This is at Turweston airfield, near Brackley, the same as last year. Same venue, same mixture, same facilities, same pub and grub, same bloke running it. You all enjoyed it last year, so book the date now, **Sunday, May 24th**.

Border Rally, June 14th, is in the capable hands of Iain Macdonald. With no Brands Hatch to think about until August, there should be no reason why all Northerners and some Southerners should not have a real go at this one.

Northern Driving Tests and Concours on July 4th again organised by Herbert with the mixture as before, but rather less diluted this year, I hope!

Inter-Marque Rally, July 12th. This event, which takes the place of the Surrey Treasure Hunt last year, is being run by Trevor Peerless. The invited clubs are the A.M.O.C., Alvis 12/50 Register, Amilcar, and A.C. Owners. All details from Trevor.

Bentley D.C. Silverstone, August 1st. This is, of course, a very important invitation event, and

it is hoped that some new faces as well as all the old ones will turn out on this occasion. More people entered for B.D.C. Firlie last year than for the Silverstone meeting. This seems strange, as the stress on the car can hardly be more at one than the other. This is the *only* Lagonda Race of the year, so let's give the spectators something to look at this year!

Brands Hatch Sprint, August 23rd. This being the only available date this year, brings our biggest event neatly sandwiched between the two B.D.C. invitation events—a busy month indeed, but at least you should all have had your holidays by then! All details from James Woollard.

Yorkshire Autumn Social and Concours, September 6th, or Schofield's Spit and Polish Special. Just the sort of day out for the Family Man, or for the Family Man's Son to attend with another Family Man's daughter!

B.D.C. Firlie Hill Climb, September 13th. This is a very popular event, with an ever increasing entry each year. Even if you don't compete, it makes a most enjoyable day out in very attractive surroundings—and the weather is usually fine!

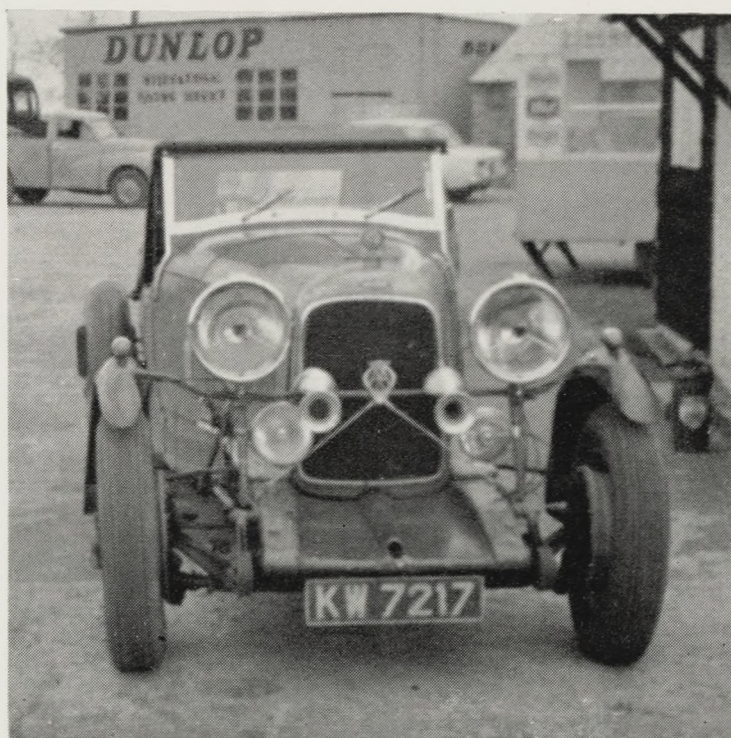
Rapier Register Driving Tests, September 19th. This is a new venture for the Rapier Register and will take the form of tests on the same site as the Southern Rally. The event will be co-promoted with the Lagonda Club, and I'm sure that a good turnout of Lagonda's will give the Rapiers the necessary encouragement to run a similar meeting next year.

That brings us up to mid-September. I hope that my brief descriptions of the various events will be of interest to new members, and serve as reminders to those of you who *intend* competing and have lost your Fixture Lists. The committee feels that the calendar is full and reasonably comprehensive, but if anyone has any ideas or suggestions for other types of event, please let us hear about them.

J.C.W.



SOME NOTES ON AN INTERESTING 3 LITRE



by ELLIOT ELDER

I MUST POINT OUT, FIRST OF ALL, THAT I DID NOT "find" this car. It was previously owned by member Alex Dick of Dundee, who very kindly gave it to me when it developed bearing trouble which neither he nor the local garage had time or facilities to repair.

As to its history, it was sold in 1953 by Chiltern Cars as "one of the 1929 team cars". The new owner, who lived in Fife, paid no particular attention to this claim until, after a very fierce drive down from Thurso, he had to replace a piston (*must* have been a hard driver!), and found that those stocked by "Hepolite" did not match the ones in the engine. H. & G. much surprised, wrote to Lagondas, giving the engine number and were informed that this was "one of three such engines prepared for competition use in 1929", and that the required pistons were 2-litre Lea Francis! One of these was duly fitted.

This owner, whose letter came to me with the car, also fitted the present front wings (ex Alfa-Romeo Monza) and a radiator cowl from the same source—to save cleaning it—since removed. I intend to have replicas of the original front and

rear wings made, if anyone will supply me with the necessary data.

I was inclined to disbelieve the idea of its having any competition history, as I had always understood that all Lagonda's records were lost during the war but an ex-employee of Lagondas (still sporting his vintage staff badge) present at a recent Scottish Meeting, pointed out to me that the nearside front engine bearer was stamped 2-6-9 (the date?), R.S.3 which he explained meant "Racing Special 3-litre". As he worked on assembling and finishing all the 3-litre engines, he certainly ought to know. The chassis plate reads Z3S-T which also seems to suggest that it is a team car, but not the one recently shown in *The Lagonda* unless it was re-registered when it came into private ownership.

The chassis, brakes, etc. seem identical to the Hindmarsh car, but this one has been badly crashed at some time—long ago, as only the original green paint doesn't appear all over the body under the other layers—and little remains of the original bodywork except the scuttle, door, and framework round the driver's elbow cutaway, where there are traces of the original fabric. The windscreen, wings, and chassis covers have been replaced with standard Lagonda parts, and the present metal-panelled body fitted, but certain features, not found on the normal tourers, still remain—the oval, cast alloy "foot steps", the original scuttle ventilator, the driver's elbow cutaway, the holes for the earlier windscreen, and the absence of any holes for the stalked sidelamps found on other tourers at that time.

I do not know whether the engine has any special features, other than its pistons, but I note that all the parts of one carburettor are stamped with the figure 3 and all those of the other with a 4, which I haven't noticed on other Lagonda engines. The cylinder head is —97 thou, but this was done in recent times and seems to be entirely beneficial, even on cheap petrol.

The performance is very much livelier than the normal 3-litre, helped by a quick gearchange in that very crude and noisy straight-cut box, acceleration being almost of M.45 standard and maximum speed just 90 m.p.h.—it weighs 32 cwt. and returns 21 m.p.g. in normal running. The cable/rod brakes are not really up to this sort of performance and weight, and might well account for its lack of success in competition, though they rarely need adjustment.

It must have covered a vast mileage—there is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. wear in the front starter bush, though this still works perfectly—but has proved to be a most satisfactory vehicle, wonderfully effortless on long journeys, though somewhat less so in traffic, where the small size, pre-selector gears, and powerful brakes of its Rapier stablemates are much preferred.

It has covered over 7,000 miles this season, always driven hard, with long spells over 70 m.p.h. and rarely given any trouble, except for four defunct magnetos, in spite of having a broken crankcase and *seven* temporarily botched-up main bearings from another engine. The crankcase is unfortunately beyond economic repair, having been ruined by a firm of so-called Vintage Specialists who, having ground the crank and made new main bearings found that the main caps had been filed, and instead of shimming them, simply split-pinned all the nuts finger-tight! Soon of course the crank vibrated, the nuts cut nut-shaped holes in the bearing caps, the bearings turned in their housings, being broken up by the locating dowels, so broken in most cases that the oil continues to reach the big-ends, and one stud which had a shorter thread than the rest, broke away the large chunk of crankcase which held it and this half of the main hung down clear of the crank—and the engine continued to run for several thousand miles in this state! (driven very hard). Eventually one of the shells turned so far in its housing that it shut off the oil supply to the adjacent big-end—and so the car came to me! I was reluctant to spend much on the car, as I didn't know anything of its history or general condition, so I didn't remove the engine but lowered the crankshaft on two jacks, without breaking the timing chain, and managed to replace most of the main shells with some from an old $3\frac{1}{2}$ engine scraping them in individually—tedious, especially lying underneath. The broken piece of crankcase was replaced with Hermetite and a long stud and, surprisingly, it has worked very well. I have now got an excellent 1934 engine, and will use the bottom end of this, with the original head, so that I can drive without anxiety!

Editor's Note

Elliot Elder is well known in Scottish circles, he lives in Edinburgh, as a most enthusiastic follower of all things Lagonda. The Rapier has

been his main interest for a good many years and he seems to have a large garage full of these which he takes to pieces and rebuilds in a much modified form from time to time. Recently he has turned to other models and constructed a very fine $4\frac{1}{2}/3\frac{1}{2}$ Special (with pre-selector gear box of course!) which then came South and seems to have gone into hiding, and now the 3-litre. When he isn't doing all this he is helping Jonathan Abson run and maintain his competition Rapier.

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THE LION RAMPANT

by J. McKellar-Cairns

1963 WAS IN MANY WAYS VERY QUIET IN CLUB activity in Scotland. Two social meetings were held, described in an earlier issue as pub meets. In actual fact, at one of these meetings ably run by Ron Siggins, due to an alteration to licensing regulations, no drinks could be obtained and various cars had to be sent off to obtain supplies of lemonade, this on the warmest day of the year. On reflection the only really hot day that we had! It was neither a good year for wine nor weather but a very good year for temperature gauges and tyres. I have been asked at this stage to categorically deny that Ron Siggins' 16/80 has been seen plying for hire.

Iain Macdonald's Border Rally drew the usual people from Scotland in what a local described as most unusual cars. Unfortunately we had to return without having managed to bully Iain into giving us prizes. A most enjoyable day was had by all and the day ended with at least one person driving off with a glass object perched on the running board. Our hearts were warmed, however, by Jonathan Abson who carried the flag very well at meetings in the South. Jonathan is a big lad and when he gets into his very abbreviated Rapier there isn't room for very much more than a flag. He has, however, acquired a 3-litre saloon which looks very staid but isn't; he is also currently engaged on a hush-hush Rapier project, work being ably directed by Elliot Elder.

Reference was made in the Autumn issue to Hamish Gunn's reputed use of brake back plates—it's true! He doesn't even need to put the light on. Robin Brownlie is currently engaged on a very professional rebuild of a 2-litre, as also is Leslie Thornton, although not with quite the same approach, I was going to say single mindedness but Robin is to be married this Spring. Reports that he is setting up home in his garage are not true. Betts Brown's magnificent machine has recovered from an argument with two others—more modern machines. For some time grave doubts were entertained as to the patient's recovery. However, skilful surgery applied to the woodwork and plastic surgery to the wings have restored the patient's health. Incidentally the reason that so many cars are off the road up

here may be attributed to our native approach to running costs.

Whilst on holiday in the misty Island of Mull with our modern type car—displaying club badges, of course—we were very surprised when a mechanic looked at the badge and said that he had seen one on the island the previous month and had, indeed, supplied petrol. We were disturbed at this and could find no confirmation from any other person. Judge our surprise to find it confirmed in *The Tatler*, but Sir!—please answer the question that has plagued us since we first were told, 14 gallons of petrol and 40 shots of Redex?

This year it is hoped to run two social meetings at which we hope to see all the old faces, some new ones and, of course, new cars. We also hope to run, if sufficient members show enthusiasm, a treasure hunt of a fairly simple type. There are indications that the Bentley and Alvis owners may also combine.

Pub Meets

For your information here is a list of the regular meetings:—

LONDON: Coach & Horses, Avery Row, Grosvenor Street, W.1. Third Thursday of each month.

MANCHESTER: West Towers Country Club, Church Lane, Marple, Cheshire. Second Thursday of each month.

LEEDS: Olde Sun Inne, Colton. First Tuesday in the month.

NEWCASTLE: Lion & Lamb, Horsley. Last Wednesday of each month.

HULL: Half Moon, Skidby. Last Tuesday of each month.

CANTERBURY: The Grove Ferry Hotel, Upstreet, Nr. Canterbury. First Sunday of each month.

HORSHAM: Crown Hotel, Carfax, Nr. Horsham. Last Friday of each month.

NEWCASTLE: (Staffs.): Cock Inn, Stapleford. Last Wednesday of each month.

DORSET: Hambro Arms, Milton Abbas. First Friday of each month.

BECKENHAM: (Kent): Three Tuns, High Street. Each Sunday lunchtime.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAPIER...

Photo: Harold Barker

by M. H. WILBY

IN THE EARLY 1930'S THE LAGONDA COMPANY decided to increase their activities to embrace the small sports car field at that time increasing in popularity.

The aim was to produce a motor car of interesting design and high standard of workmanship which would carry on the good name and even replace the 2-litre and 16/80 models which by this time were obsolescent.

I. T. Ashcroft was bought into the company to carry out the design work and in the latter part of 1932 and early 1933 work went ahead. By the autumn the prototype was running and the first public announcements of this model appeared in the press in September and October just prior to the Motor Show.

What a sensation it caused! Not for many years had a production car, particularly a small one, been built on such classic racing lines and many of its features were new.

The 4-cylinder engine with a bore and stroke of 62.5 mm and 90 mm respectively had a capacity of 1104 cc and twin overhead camshafts were operated by chains which allowed removal of the cylinder head without upsetting the timing. The valves were set at 90° in the head and the individual ports were of "cross flow" design.

The finish of the engine was of a very high order and the proportions massive. The fully balanced crankshaft was 2 in. diameter (the same

size as the 4½-litre) and ran in three main bearings of the same size. The connecting rods were extremely wide in section and were matched in balanced sets while the pistons gave a compression ratio of 7.5 to 1. Twin Zenith carburettors fed the mixture, and a two gallon sump with full flow Tecalomet oil filter ensured that high revolutions could be maintained over long periods. The maximum revolutions of 5,500 could clearly be obtained very quickly. The power output of 45 b.h.p. was considerably more than any other standard 1100 cc engine at that time. Magneto ignition was employed.

The drive was taken via a four speed pre-selector E.N.V. type 75 gearbox to a three quarter floating E.N.V. axle which used half shafts of 1½ in. diameter which is why it appears that a Rapier never breaks this component.

A rear axle ratio of 5.28 : 1 gave intermediate ratios of 17.95, 10.56 and 7.18. Alternative ratios were offered at this time but this was not so when production finally commenced. Later the saloon and drophead coupé and all cars built by the Rapier Company had a lower final drive giving ratios of 5.57, 7.57, 11.14 and 18.9 to 1.

The chassis of deep section was straightforward in design with a wheel base of 7 ft. 7 in. and a track of 4 ft. Semi-elliptic springs were used all round as were Hartford shock absorbers, those at the rear being set transversely. The brakes had 13 in. drums and were operated by the Girling system. The Rapier was perhaps one of the first cars to be so fitted.

Although it was intended to offer the Rapier as a chassis only at £270, a 4-seater tourer body, looking much like that of a Wolseley Hornet, was constructed by Whitting and Mitchel for Kevill-Davies and March in time for it to appear in this form on the Lagonda stand at the 1933 Motor Show at Olympia, the price of the complete car being £375. This drew much attention and favourable comment but it is doubtful if many people knew that the sump of this car was a hurried affair made in the tinsmith's shop at Staines as the cast aluminium one still had not been completed.

It was announced that the first release of this outstanding model would be about 30th December 1933 but in fact some months of development work were put in before it finally made a public appearance.

In these months the prototype had been running steadily and was used by Lord de Clifford in the R.A.C. rally in March where it was amongst the finishers.

In April 1934 production time was getting near and shortly afterwards the first cars appeared showing quite a few departures from the original. The chassis now appeared with a wheel base of 8 ft. 4 in. as the coachbuilders had decided that a decent looking body could not be built on the shorter chassis. Their wisdom was evident when the elegant tourer and saloon bodies by Abbott were shown. The engine now had a block of a different casting still unfortunately in iron, like the head, as finances would not allow alloy. The chain case was modified and the main water gallery was cast aluminium which looked rather better than the length of copper pipe previously used. The carburettors were two S.U.'s on a new manifold and fed from an 8-gallon rear tank. A single dry plate clutch was now interposed between engine and gearbox and a special trip mechanism held the clutch out when in neutral and stopped the whine so often heard on pre-selector gearboxes.

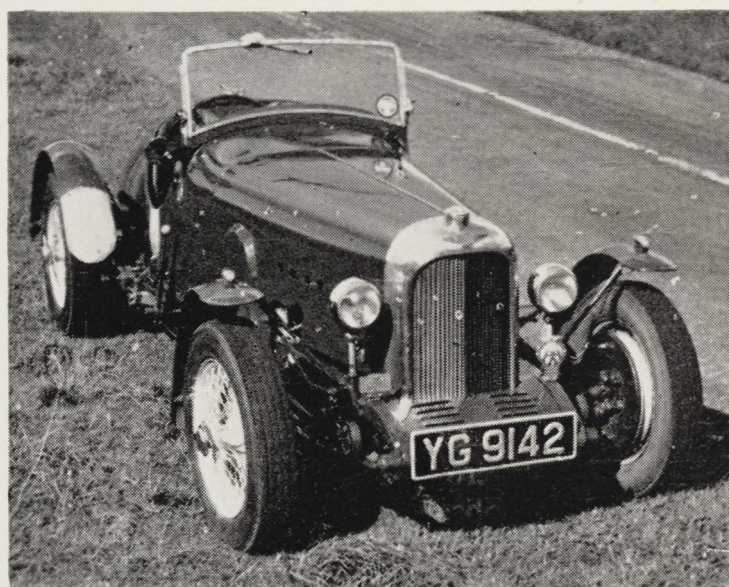
Early in July all was ready and a launching party was held at Great Fosters near Egham which was attended by Sir Malcolm Campbell, Capt. George Eyston, the Hon. Brian Lewis and several female film stars of the day.

On show was a bare chassis and a rather special bodied 2-seater by John Charles. This

car with a racing shell was driven at Le Mans earlier in the year by Lord de Clifford. Also to be seen were a more normal 2-seater by E. J. Newns (generally known as the Eagle body) and a 4-seater tourer by Abbott which over the years proved most popular of all.

By this time cars were already in Distributors hands and apart from Lord de Clifford's trouble-free run at Le Mans various demonstrations, like storming hills in Yorkshire, had taken place.

These demonstrations and the road tests that immediately followed all praised the car to a high degree, especially the road holding, brakes and steering which remained unsurpassed for many years. In fact the power of the brakes was such



Much-modified Rapier.

Elliot Elder.

that a leading motoring journal carried out special tests to see if the 25 ft. stopping distance from 30 m.p.h. was really true. With an all-up weight of 17/18 cwt. for the open cars and with a capacity of only 1100 cc it was obvious they could not be very fast but a genuine 75 m.p.h. was available in top and over 60 m.p.h. in third gear.

Aided by the pre-selector gearbox the acceleration was better than most in its class with 0 to 50 m.p.h. taking 14 seconds and 0 to 60 m.p.h. 20 seconds; all this with a petrol consumption of 25/30 m.p.g.

In fact, as the advertisements of the time stated, this was a "scale model Lagonda" and one with excellent brakes, wonderful road holding and an unburstable engine—factors which are still true today.

(contd.)

By the time the 1934 Motor Show came round production was in full swing and no further modifications were made. Abbott now offered in addition to the 4-seater tourer, a two-door fixed head coupé at £398 and a drophead coupé at £408. Other coachbuilders bodied Rapiers at this period notably the Eagle 2-seater at £375 and in a few cases a drophead coupé by Maltby at £398. Abbott, however, had found the classic line and built the great majority of the coachwork. Alternative bodies by Corinthian, Silent Touring, and others are still sometimes seen.

Popular as this model was it was clear that its very high price for a small high performance car was keeping it from its very market and when the company was re-formed in the middle of 1935 it was decided to concentrate on the 4½-litre, all other models including the Rapier were dropped. The Rapier had been in full production for about 12 months and in that time perhaps 200 had been made.

It was clear it was too good a design to waste and in August 1935 a new company called the Rapier Car Co. was founded by the original designer Tim Ashcroft together with Major W. H. Oates and N. Brocklebank who took over all the parts, jigs, tools, etc. together with the old Hammersmith service station and continued manufacture calling the car simply "Rapier".

Apart from a different badge it was the same car. In fact, all Lagonda guarantees were honoured and production continued but now as a complete car, the bodies of rather less vintage lines being by Ranelagh.

In 1936 a supercharged version was introduced which achieved 90 m.p.h. and accelerated 0 to 50 in under 10 seconds. Truly the beginning of an exciting car, but production of this and unsupercharged models was spasmodic and by the time the war in 1939 stopped production of this interesting model for ever, it is doubtful if the Rapier Company produced more than 100 cars.

Of the combined total of 300 something like 175 survive today performing as they did 25 or more years ago.

On the competition side they were never used a great deal, being handicapped by weight and a capacity that just took them outside the "eleven hundred" class.

continued on page 18

The Phenomenal

14-60 H.P.



THERE is fascination in this 14.60 h.p. 2-Litre Lagonda—for the engineer, in the perfection of its design—for the owner-driver, in the silken smoothness of its running, its wonderful acceleration, and its phenomenal performance.

Twin overhead camshafts running in oil, a five-bearing crankshaft, and a detachable cylinder head which can be removed without disturbing the valve timing or adjustment, are but a few features of an amazingly fine engine.

Centralisation of all chassis lubrication points, a four-speed gear-box, and a braking system which is fully compensated and is mounted on self-aligning ball-bearings throughout, thus ensuring maximum efficiency, are evidence of a chassis design which disarms criticism at the outset.

A "Fourteen" as far as taxation and economy in upkeep are concerned—but in performance unmistakably a "Sixty."

14/60 h.p. 2-Litre Chassis	£450
14/60 h.p. 2-Litre Semi-Sports Model ..	£590
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WHERE ARE THEY NOW? No. 4

THERE is fascination it says—indeed there is because it is nearly 38 years since this advertisement appeared and the fascination still exists for the 14/60 and later 2-litre models. It exists not only for those who can look back and remember those “good old days” but for the many present day owners of this most lovable of all Lagondas, some of whom were not born when people paid their four pennies and took that issue of *The Autocar* from the bookstalls on the April 9th, 1926!

Looking at it now in the light of present day performance, the 14/60, particularly in Saloon form, doesn't seem a very lively carriage but those who have ridden in one will know that progress is comfortable, unhurried and dignified and it is not difficult to imagine the 14/60 that took the Dowager Duchess gliding past the wrought iron gates, up the elm lined drive to the Cotswold stone mansion where the baized aproned “boots” awaits to open the solid and well-fitting door of the Lagonda coachwork.

What was so phenomenal about the performance is hard to say unless it was the effort of the mixture to fight its way up the very weird induction system that seems to offset all the other good and advanced features listed in the advertisement.

Does PE.6459 still perform its dignified duties, does it still take the children to the railway station at the beginning of a new school term, does it still give the head of the household a chance to wear his top hat in the car on the way to a local wedding, does it still get washed and polished every day outside the coach house, or is it like so many others now neglected and weed-covered, or doing duty as a chicken house? As it is not now on the Club Register, perhaps it will never be known. In fact, until recently the only 14/60 saloon in the Club was in the ownership of, appropriately enough, the Club Registrar. Happily a new member also has one so perhaps come the Spring, the lanes will again echo to the rumble of The Phenomenal 14/60.

M.H.W.

The advertisement opposite is reproduced by courtesy of the *Autocar*.

RAPIERS CONTD.

Roy Eccles was most successful with one of the last Lagonda-built chassis. After reducing the capacity to under 1100 cc it was fitted with a Zoller supercharger (in much the same way as the later production cars) and a neat single-seater body. Over the years it had some remarkable runs at Brooklands scoring many wins on the outer and Campbell circuits. The outer circuit was lapped at over 120 m.p.h. and the car seemed most reliable. This was rather a contrast to a similar supercharged one entered by Granville Greenfell in 1936 which blew up in a big way.

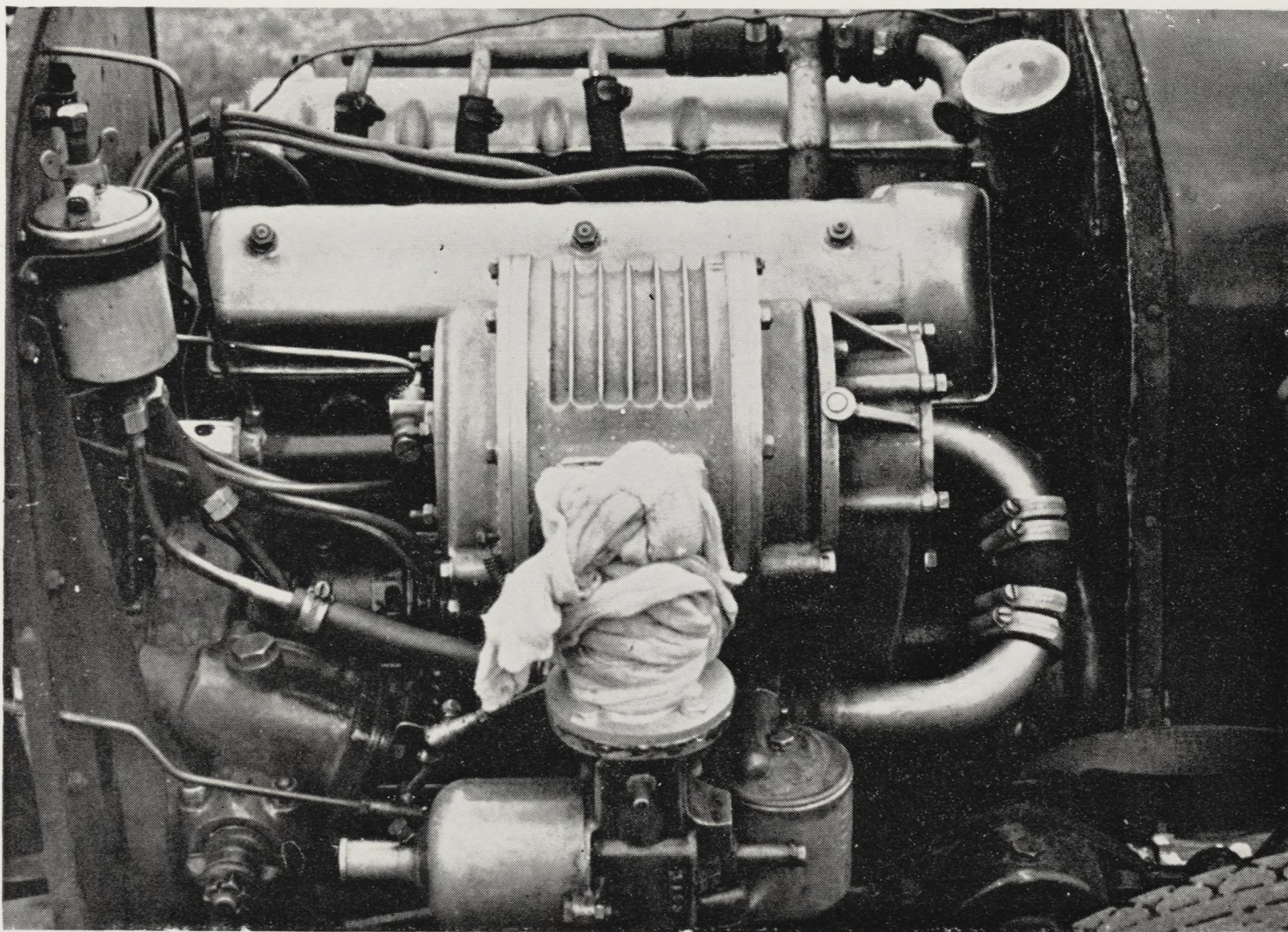
No other cars appeared in true racing form but C. Barker ran a stripped standard bodied Rapier in the 1935 Light Car Club Relay Race at Brooklands and helped his team (a Frazer-Nash and an MG) finish second. He had covered 30 laps at just under 80 m.p.h.

Lord de Clifford of course developed the Rapier along his own lines and it was called the de Clifford Rapier, the main departures being

different camshafts and exhaust manifolds. With these models apart from his Le Mans run he competed in the Monte Carlo Rally and various events in this country.

Incidentally, when racing was re-started after the 1939-45 War Paul Emery raced with some success a most interesting special powered by a fairly normal Rapier engine with two stage supercharging at about 28 lb. per square inch. The fact that it never blew up gave heart to all the amateurs who then and now take part in Club races and felt that 5500 r.p.m. was a bit much for engines well over 20 years old!

Emery's success lead Daniel Richmond to produce a Rapier possibly even faster than the pre-war Eccles one. This employed all Rapier parts including chassis and normal suspension but again with very high two stage supercharging and many internal modifications. The brake horsepower of this car was enormous at 160+ at a guess which would seem to be about the end of the road for this most interesting of Lagondas.



Engine of the Eccles' Rapier. Mutton cloth non-standard.

Jeremy Mason



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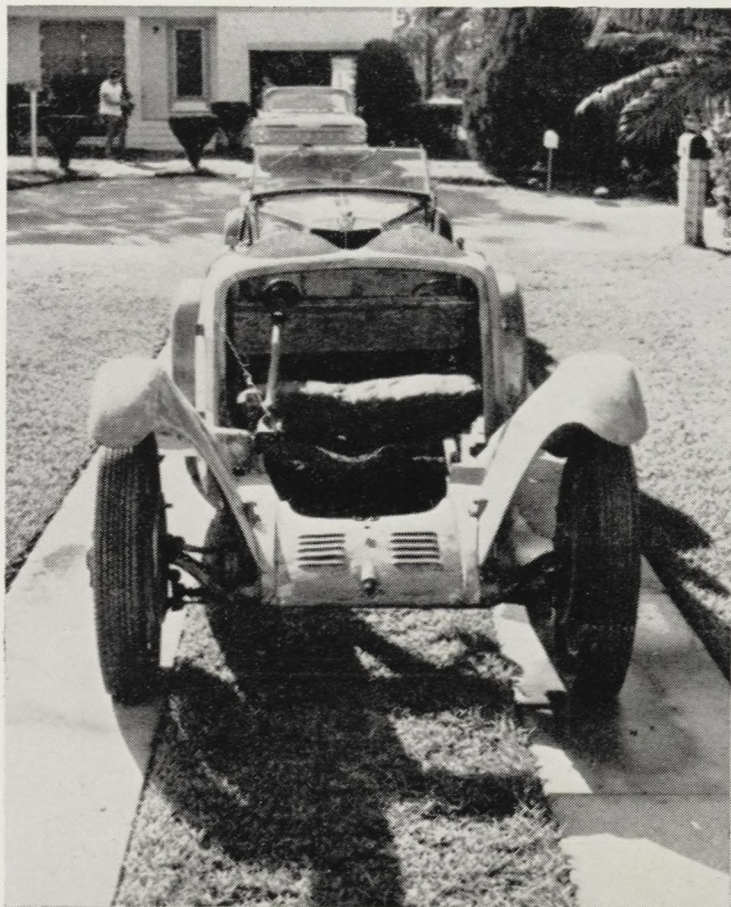
LESNEY PRODUCTS & CO. LTD.
Eastway, Hackney Wick,
London, E.9.

AMERICAN NEWS

BUD HABERSIN of Miami, Florida, reports on the Rapier he is rebuilding

I KNEW AT FIRST SIGHT THE RAPIER WAS WORTH restoring and keeping for show. After getting the instruction book and other literature plus books I've read here, makes it even more of a challenge to complete.

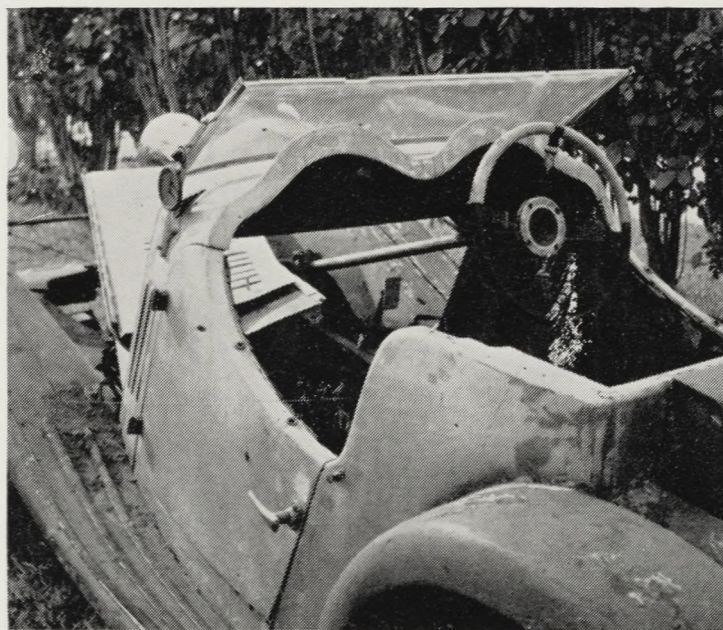
In the enclosed photos, you will note a sad Rapier. Since these pictures were taken a bit of work has been done, still hard to see mainly because everything on the car needs attention. In the 10 weeks of ownership over 200 hours of labour—friends still say, "What did you do?" Most of the wood will be replaced, and note here—I did not see a '36 two seater listed in the Register. The all aluminium body is in good order, steel fenders (wings) were badly rusted out and misshaped, but feel now that with the welding and fibre-glass they are in about perfect shape. In the process of all the work, parts, dents and paint were removed, on inspection the original paint came about—bright red—and the



Still a long way to go!

Bud Habersin.

leather was bright red as well. In reading a book on cars of yesteryear, read where a small Lagonda was shown at Le Mans in 1936 and created a spectacle because of the bright red colour scheme. With the red colour, a two seater, extra light body, the bump on hood for supercharger, sort of adds to the interest of maybe BRU 366 was the car? (Can readers throw any light on this? Ed.)



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REPORT FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

by
**Frank
Storrs**



ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SPECIFIC SECTION OF THE club in Ireland there are several stalwart members of the V.S.C.C. (Irish Section) who have appeared in various of the competitive events run by this club during the last year. Not only have they appeared but in some ways can be said to have achieved some reasonable success. There were two Lagondas in the Spring Rally, three in the Kirkistone race, three in the Craigtantlet Hill Climb, and two in the Night Rally—not to mention the regular attendance at social functions.

At Kirkistone, John Longridge's 4½, driven by Stanley Porter, managed second place, despite some rather weird handicapping. At Craigtantlet, which is a national event, John Longridge won the Open Handicap and the Vintage Class in his M.45, hotly pursued by Frank Storrs in the LG45, whilst Harry Kinch in John's 2-litre managed to block the course for several minutes while attempting to change gear on a corner.

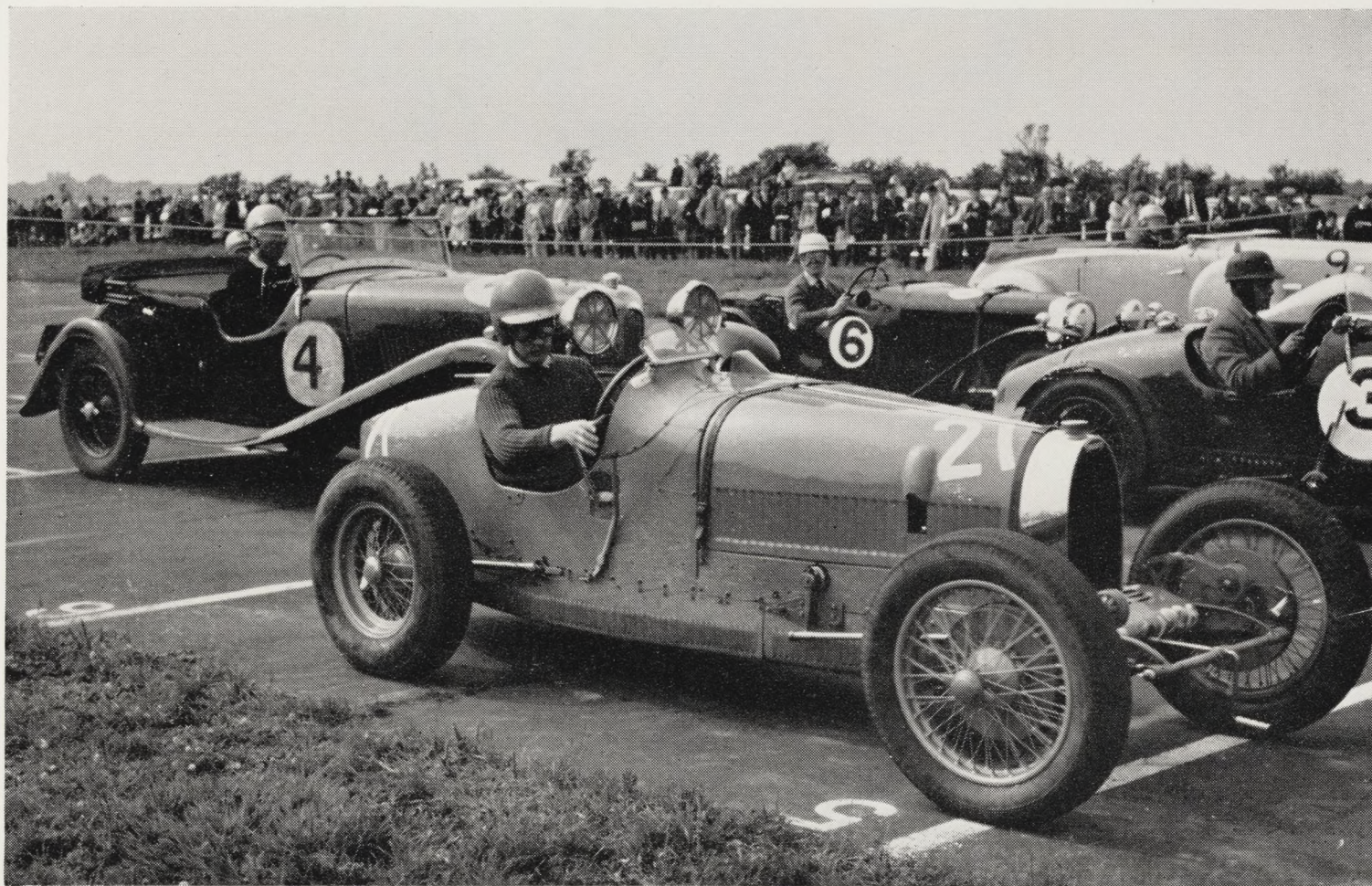
There are other Lagondas in existence up here, and it would be nice to flush Henry Dunleath's team car and Billy Galbraith's 2-litre out of cover for the coming season.

Rumour has it that a rather famous V-12 Le Mans car has been seen around lately and may emerge from chrysalis in Shane's Castle and perform this year.

Editor's Note: This article was held over from the Winter issue. On the next page there are two more photographs by Frank Storrs. The photograph above shows the 2-litre and M45 owned by J. Longridge, complete with trophies.

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Kirkistone July 1963. Note handicapping. *Frank Storrs.*



Frank Storrs' own LG45 Tourer.

TECHNICAL NOTES

A great deal has been said and written on the question of what modifications and improvements it is desirable to make when repairing or rebuilding a P.V.T. or Vintage car. We may leave out of consideration those modifications which are introduced only for competition purposes or in cars used only for racing. The field is still nevertheless wide enough for controversy.

We can leave out of our discussion also those cars which for any reason are being preserved in genuinely original condition. But in any car which is to be used with safety and pleasure on the road some changes are desirable, while some have become obligatory by law. The most obvious of these are the changes in the statutory requirements for vehicle lighting. Very few Lagondas with their original lights comply with these requirements. The necessary modifications have therefore been carried out. The rear and stop-lights have generally been done well, in fact usually professionally. At the front, however, it is a different story: many people have been content with the minimum modification of headlights necessary to pass the Marples test. They are then frequently a nuisance to themselves and to everyone else.

The cars which are the most difficult to deal with in the matter of headlight dipping are the 2-litre and 3-litre cars. Many of these were fitted with the LUCAS P.100 DB headlamps. These lamps give a dipped beam by switching off the main bulb and switching on a bulb with a transverse filament (Lucas No. 57) behind the lens on the triflex bar. The angle of this beam is adjusted by screwing the lampholder up or down. As an anti-dazzle device this is extremely effective, but in competition with modern anti-dazzle systems it does not give enough light. It is interesting that in France, where anti-dazzle regulations are more strict than in England, the dipped beam of the P.100 DB is perfectly satisfactory, at least to me and to the local gendarm-erie. However, in England one has to abandon the P.100 DB as a dipping device. The simplest replacement is to use as the passing light a flat topped beam lamp, and many cars have this modification. The fog lamp fitted as original equipment to many 2- and 3-litre cars is satisfactory, but has to be raised about 2½ inches in order to comply with the regulation stating that

lamps except those used only in fog or snow must be 2 feet above the ground. Many better lamps than the originally fitted FT 37 are now to be had, and it is only common sense, if this method of dipping is used, to fit a modern lamp. M.45's have this arrangement anyway, but still require the lamp to be raised vertically about 2 inches. I have made a little hollow box with cut-away sides which fits on to the existing lamp bracket and raises the lamp the required amount. It is quite simply made from bent steel strip 3 in. wide by ⅛ in. thick.

Later cars than the M.45 frequently have tilting reflectors, which if they work are excellent.

An item which appears frequently on modern "specials" and on one or two production cars is the electric fan. This makes a particular appeal to Lagonda owners, since those cars which are fitted with fans are in general grossly over-cooled most of the time, and those which have no fans only feel the need of them in traffic jams or in exceptional conditions. Also, the fans on the 4½-litres are noisy and take quite a lot of power. The 3-litre fan is better mounted and has better bearings and although it takes as much power it is quieter. About a year ago I decided to make a practical test of an electric fan on one of my 4½-litres, a saloon which I use a good deal in London. I obtained a Lucas fan motor, as fitted to one modern GT car, and fitted it with a five-bladed phenolic resin fan 12 in. in diameter made for me by the Aircscrew Co., reversing the rotation of the motor to suit the fan. I took some trouble to get the right fan, since it is desirable to have one which is correctly designed and will run quietly. The speed of this fan and motor combination is about 2500 r.p.m. (within about 300 r.p.m.): the current taken by the motor is 8 amperes. As this is an experimental installation I did not fit a temperature controlled switch, but use an ordinary manual switch and a blue warning light. This fan has now been in use throughout one summer and winter and has been found most satisfactory. Not only does it give good temperature control and quicker warming up: it is almost inaudible, even if the engine is not running and the fan is left on. Wear on the bearings of the fan pulley shaft on the engine is much reduced, which keeps the timing and generator drive quieter. I now have electric fans on both my 4½-litre cars which are in use. One has been fitted to an LG45, and I am now developing

a mounting for the V-12, and for the 3-litre. I should think that if anyone ever uses a 2-litre for city motoring an electric fan would be a good thing.

There are one or two points concerning brake maintenance which are not sufficiently well known, although at first I thought them too trivial to mention. If, for instance, the brake drums have been skimmed at any time to remove ridges or to restore them to a circular profile, it is then necessary to insert shimstock of appropriate thickness between the shoes and the linings. If this is not done, much of the adjustment may be taken up before the brakes shoes begin to touch the drums at all. Also, owing to geometry, the linings will only be in contact over a very small part of the circumference of the drums. Some brake drums have by now been skimmed so often that they are no longer serviceable, since they deform under the pressure of the shoes and give rise to jerky braking, locking of the wheels and so on. A service exists for relining brake drums, but this is expensive and for drums of the earlier 2-litre and 3-litre type not very satisfactory. Even on the ground of cost it would be preferable to have new drums made, at least for 2-litre and 3-litre cars. I think the 4½-litre and V-12 drums might be built up internally with success, but this has not yet been tried.

Not all that might be done is too often done in the care of the brake linkages. In this expression I include all the moving parts and their bearings from the pedal to the wheels. Each type of car has its peculiarities, but the general principles are the same. The pedal is often loose on its pivot: on the M.45 the pivot is not even lubricated: most 2- and 3-litres have a grease nipple there. To deal with this the hole in the bottom of the pedal must be made circular and a bush made to go between the pedal and the pivot (on the M.45 the pedal is mounted on the front brake cross-shaft, which must also be cleaned up). The self-aligning bearings on which the cross-shafts (back and front) are mounted get very hard wear: so much so that I have even seen them broken up. These then should be looked at and if suspect replaced. Similarly the bearings in which the brake camshafts run should be kept oiled and free from play. This may entail re-bushing the bearings in the back-plates and building up the shafts. The cams should be looked at also on the 2- and 3-litres, and if the

corners are worn they should be rebuilt and re-hardened. The ingenious arrangement of the so-called diabolo-shaped pieces in the M.45 brakes works well and seems to wear very well too.

Those cars which have Girling brakes also need attention to the compensators, front and rear. It is no good tinkering with these: if new ones cannot be got, and I believe they cannot, then the old ones must be rebuilt by making new hardened steel pivots and fitting new bushes. If the job is done carefully the compensators will be better than new, for they are one of the few shoddily-made parts to be found in any Lagonda.

The Perrot shafts of the front brakes are often neglected and the ball joints are allowed, like the nine men's Morris, to become filled up with mud. They should be cleaned and lubricated and the covers kept in good order. If the leather gaiters on the 3-litre and 2-litres are perished, they may be replaced by corrugated rubber tube if this is properly secured. The little metal cups on the M.45 often get crushed, but can be straightened out: if not, see the Spares Registrar.

This only leaves the rods, cables and clevises. Faults in these are clearly to be seen, except that the cables usually fail where they go round the pulleys and are out of sight. Cables can be obtained, with new ends if desired, or fitted to your own ends, from at least one firm in London. The service is excellent and very rapid. The clevis pins used in Lagondas are of a type not now available commercially. If replacements are made, they should be of a work-hardening steel or else should be case-hardened after manufacture and if possible finish ground on the plain diameter. Similarly, if the brake rods have to be replaced—as they often do on the M.45's—mild steel rod is not a suitable material. An alloy steel, or at least a fairly high carbon steel should be used. The usual reasons for replacing brake rods are that the threads are worn away at the adjusting points, or else that the rods have worn away where they rub on the chassis or on the spring shackles. It is surprising how many rattles disappear when all the clevis pins in the brake linkages are replaced and the hanger pivots on the front brakes are restored to a good fit. The hanger pivots are a bit of a nuisance to do, since they must be removed from the chassis together with their mountings. Usually new pins have to be made and brazed or welded into the old mountings, and hardened afterwards.

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TRIAL BY JURY

by Laurence Pomeroy

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FEW CARS HAVE BEEN SO QUICKLY ACKNOWLEDGED to be in the front rank as the V-12 Lagonda.

Since its introduction *The Motor* has, in various articles and road tests, appreciated fully its outstanding qualities. Let me quote, for instance, from a report based on a road test carried out by a colleague in 1938: "The Lagonda remains in some respects unique, so successfully does it combine tremendous performance with smoothness and quietness, and excellent road holding with personal comfort".

The sale of these cars is still continuing, as a steady export trade, particularly with America, is being carried on.

The latest types embody certain detail refinements and I was, therefore, pleased to accept an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with the 10-ft. 4-in. wheelbase saloon, for it is a model that had previously captured my enthusiasm on many long, high-speed runs both in this country and abroad. It occurred to me that to avoid any bias of such favourable associations it would be distinctly interesting to submit the car, on this occasion, to a panel of representative drivers, and to make a report based more on their reactions to it than my own.

I was fortunate to be able to secure the co-operation of Peter Clark, who has performed so well at Le Mans in his $1\frac{1}{2}$ -litre H.R.G., Sam Clutton, whose expert handling of the inspiring 12-litre Itala is a feature of our speed meetings, and Anthony Heal, who runs a very fast 30-98 Vauxhall in private use and rushes up Shelsley Walsh and other places at enormous speeds on his old 10-litre Fiat.

Dawdling at 80 m.p.h.

Picking the model up at Staines, I took the wheel for the first stage of the journey via Windsor to Maidenhead and Henley. Road conditions made it impossible to exceed 80 m.p.h., a figure which is a very comfortable dawdle with the pistons touring up and down at the very moderate

speed of 2,200 ft. per minute, despite the tachometer indicating 4,000 r.p.m. But I must say candidly that the "jury" remained distinctly cool. Their general comments criticised the comparatively slow get-away on the 4.75 top gear, a seeming tendency of the car to yaw, the apparent absence of high acceleration in the upper speed ranges and the fact that the steering wheel is turned about $3\frac{1}{2}$ times from lock to lock.

All these points interested me, for with my greater knowledge of the car I thought I knew the answers. Thus I awaited the time when the critics should speak from more prolonged knowledge and experience at the wheel, and at Henley went into the passenger seat and handed over the control to Peter Clark.

He immediately shot up the long hill on the Oxford road well over 80 m.p.h., and almost as immediately said that whereas when watching the car being driven the steering ratio looked low, when actually handling the job it seemed just right, although the strong castor would produce an excessive self-righting effect if the wheel was released.

With increasing familiarity it became quite evident to all that the upper-end acceleration is really extraordinarily good, albeit disguised by the complete smoothness and quietness of the engine. Sixty to eighty m.p.h. could, for instance, be compassed in less than 13 secs., a normal time for the 10-30 m.p.h. span on a touring car. But, as Clark remarked, the engine is so unobtrusive that there is practically no indication whether the throttle is shut, half open or pushed hard on the floor, and this necessarily camouflages the rapidity at which one is travelling. So much is this the case that until the driver is thoroughly at home he has consistently to watch the speedometer, otherwise the velocity will be a deal faster than he realises, of which more anon.

Unfortunately, during the Henley-Oxford part of the trip, there seemed to be a lot of odd traffic at awkward places and nothing like the limit of speed could be obtained, yet it was made clearly evident that the road holding and the springing of the car were in advance of anything any of us had previously experienced.

Travelling over some quite rough secondary roads the car rode without a tremor at 70 m.p.h., whilst its first-class stability was indicated when

we reached the Oxford by-pass, where with the Clark foot well down the hand turned to over 100 m.p.h. It was now seen that the apparent yaw was due, largely, to the considerable distance between the rear seats and the radiator cap, as a result of which any slight motion at the front end of the car seemed somewhat exaggerated to the back passengers.

As concerns the low-end acceleration, this remains something of a paradox. The time for 10-30 m.p.h. of approximately 9 secs. (two up) is good, but it suffers by comparison from the fact that the rate of acceleration actually improves above 30 m.p.h. and up to 60 m.p.h. This is so much the reverse of what is experienced on a normal car that it takes a certain mental adjustment to appreciate what is going on.

Clutton Takes Over

After the Oxford by-pass, Sam Clutton took over to drive to Chipping Norton, and as he knew the road well, the blitzfahrt really began.

He pushed on, steadily as it appeared to us, but at a pace which would create the greatest astonishment in the mind of the London to Southend week-end potterer. The cruising speed of the car proved itself to all of us as most re-

markable. A judicious use of third gear will raise the speed from 40 to 70 m.p.h. in 12 secs. A quick snick into top sends one bowling along between 80 and 90 m.p.h., in all sorts of places where 40-50 m.p.h. would be considered good going on a mass-produced chariot. What is more, as Sam quickly demonstrated, such high speed is coupled with complete physical comfort. The torsion bar I.F.S. and long flexible semi-elliptic rear springs (which are well damped by Armstrong shock absorbers) took everything from level-crossings to roads disrupted by last winter's frost in their stride, so that at no time did the vertical acceleration approach "G" and the few inches between the rear passengers' head and the roof were never encroached upon. Moreover, so free is the car from roll that corners can be swept around with no canting over and without the horrible sensation experienced on so many American-type high-performance cars that one is in an over-canvassed yacht caught in a sudden squall.

Cornering Power Demonstrated

It fell to Sam's lot really to demonstrate the maximum in cornering ability. Advancing from Chipping Norton over the top of the Cotswolds on a narrow and open road the magic three

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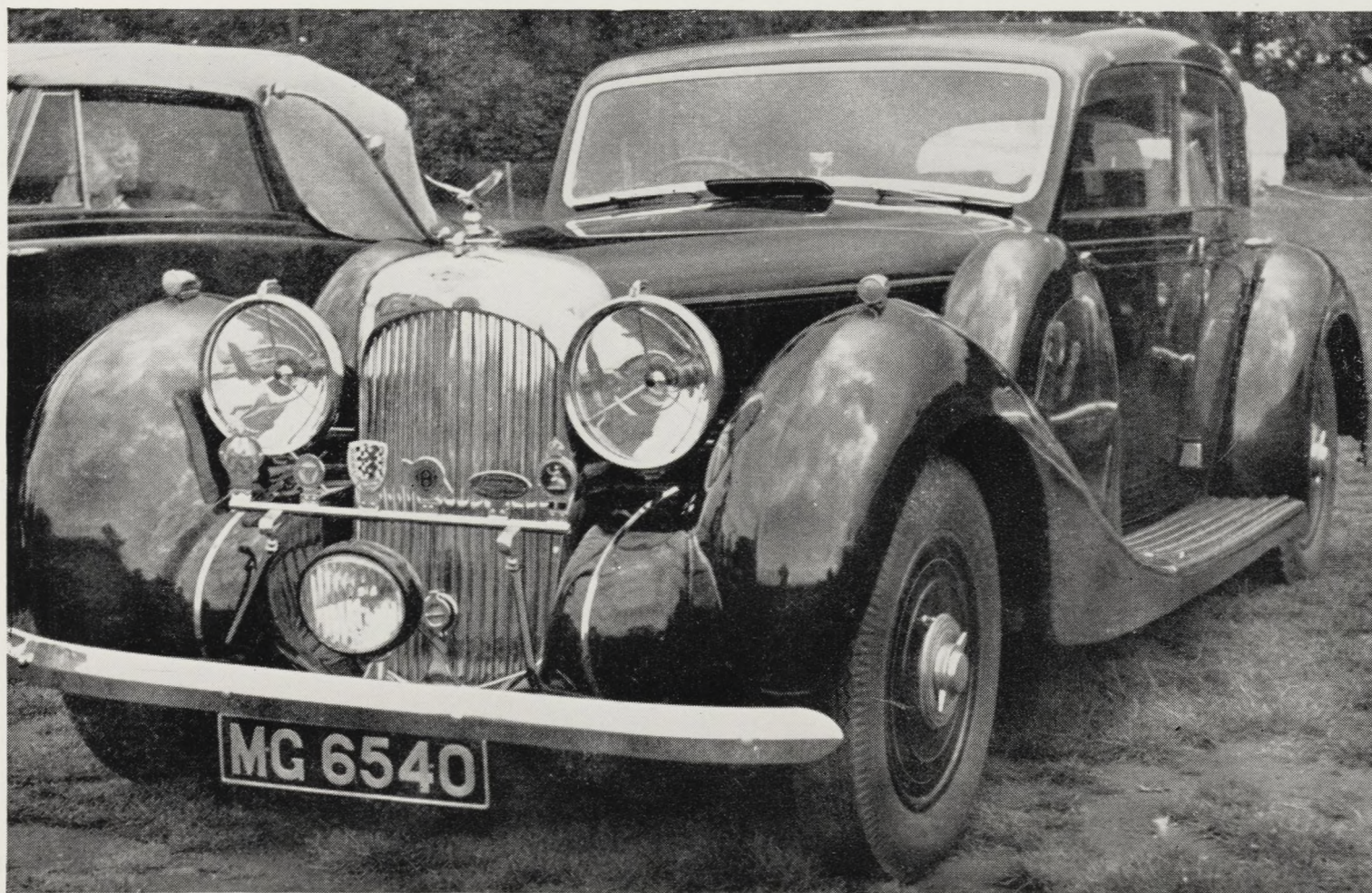
figures were again reached and we rushed up a hill with a right-hand bend. Sweeping into this at a good 70 m.p.h. the back wheels slipped on a newly tarred surface and an awkward high-speed slide brought us exceedingly close to the near-side hedge. Sam kept his foot hard down on the accelerator and steered out of the slide and all was well. But this incident and the feel of the car on other bends indicated that cornering the modern, softly sprung, high-performance car demands a technique entirely differing from that appropriate to the older type of vehicle.

With the old-fashioned hard springing there was usually a tendency to over-steer, making the back of the car skid readily. The fast driver could therefore develop the trick of spinning the back wheels and sliding the corner when really in a hurry and, by his skill, be able to hold it perfectly in control. With modern soft springing and I.F.S., the tyres cling tenaciously to the road, right up to the limit, and there is some tendency to under-steer. In consequence, corners can be taken at a tremendous speed without skidding, but if the limits of adhesion are exceeded one is much nearer to being completely out of control.

Clutton put it very well when he said that the older-type car demands skill from the driver whereas the modern, as exemplified well by Lagonda, needs more calculated judgment.

When Anthony Heal took the wheel his judgment was such that, bearing in mind the nature of the roads, we agreed that none of us had before travelled quite so fast with so complete a feeling of security. He used second and third gear freely, resulting in even more improbable speeds in unlikely places for, handled in this way, only about 15 secs. are needed to advance from 30 m.p.h. to 80 m.p.h. Let me give an example of what this means. If an ordinary motorist emerges from a built-up area and accelerates on top gear from 30 m.p.h. for 15 secs., he will reach approximately 45 m.p.h. The Lagonda will, in the same time, reach 80 m.p.h.

Obviously the acceleration and correspondingly high speed of this car would be a very real public danger if it was not magnificently braked; and on a car of this type, be it remembered, much more is demanded of the stoppers than a snap high reading on the Tapley meter from 30 m.p.h.



An example of the model described in this article. Owned by Miss Collins.

Herb Schofield.

I have vivid memories of a famous British car which needed the whole of a 30-ft. road when the brakes were applied at 70 m.p.h.; and on an American car, which is a household word, the 50 miles on English by-roads made it necessary to stand up and put the whole of one's weight on the pedal if there was to be any appreciable retardation.

The Lockheed brakes on the Lagonda are wholly free from these defects. They are so smooth that the passenger is never aware that the car is being rapidly stopped, yet so sure in action that 80-90 m.p.h. is a really usable road speed.

The views of this "juryman" regarding the steering were that the comparative low gear was made quite safe by the strong castor and the very quick return action, but this, at the same time, made the steering rather heavy on full lock. That is to say, the car has to be definitely placed on a severe bend with a fairly strong arm, and cannot be flicked around a corner by a motion of the wrist in the manner possible with some sports cars.

Heal, I must say, used all the virtues of the Lagonda to the limit, and the result was a cross-country journey which can have been rarely equalled for speed; the only thrill was when a hedge-hopping Air-speed Envoy Trainer flashed across the road in front of us at about 15 ft. from the ground at what appeared to be about 200 m.p.h.

Handling on Wet Roads

For the last 20 miles or so I took over the wheel again myself and, driving in the rain and despite the greasiness of the roads, I found the normal cruising speed of four times the old legal limit could be quite safely maintained, one or two minor slides being checked with consummate ease. But let me end by speaking of some other matters, for there is a danger that a company of high-speed enthusiasts will overlook certain merits in a car which may yet be as outstanding as its sheer performance. First, it has extraordinary tractability and flexibility; it will perambulate along in top gear at less than 10 m.p.h., and can be given wide open throttle even on "pool" petrol without a trace of pinking and with no indication from the engine that full torque is being exerted.

In this slow speed pottering, the mechanical quietness of the engine is worthy of comment, particularly because many miles on full throttle have not the slightest adverse effect.

Turning from mechanical matters to appearance and bodywork, one finds a driving position has been clearly planned by an expert, as one would expect with W. O. Bentley responsible for the car. The bonnet slopes down and both wings are clearly in view. The steering wheel comes exactly where one would wish, and the back of the front seat is adjustable for rake; this, of course, being additional to the usual sliding adjustment.

The appearance is a fine blend of restraint and impressiveness. The long, flowing wings, long bonnet and deep radiator contribute to the latter quality, the lowness of the car and an entire absence of the florid in decoration emphasise the former virtue.

Finally, it would be insincere and detract from the value of this trial by jury to leave out all

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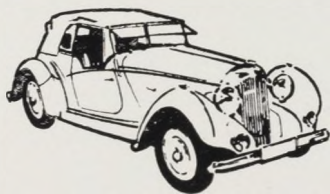
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criticism. It was, for instance, felt that the flexible rear springs allowed the rear axle to wind up somewhat when accelerating hard, and this could be felt and heard by the rear passengers. Secondly, and bearing in mind that wide changes in the speed of the car are indicated not so much by physical impressions as by the readings on the instruments, these could, with advantage, be placed nearer to the driver's line of sight. As a detail refinement, it would look nicer if the speedometer and tachometer needles moved in the same direction instead of with opposite hands, as they do now.

Thirdly, a car of this type brings the problem of wind noise to the fore to an unusual extent.

The Lagonda body may be normal in this respect, but the speeds at which it is pulled through the air by its 180 b.h.p. engine are thoroughly abnormal. In consequence, the silence of the mechanism is largely offset at, say, 80 m.p.h. by the roar of air sweeping round the windows. The sound can be cut down by keeping all the windows shut, but this course is not one always favoured by other drivers or passengers, and clearly the matter needs, and would well repay, intensive research.

The perfect car is not yet with us, but this Bentley-designed Lagonda V-12, in the opinion of four very experienced motorists, approaches perfection.



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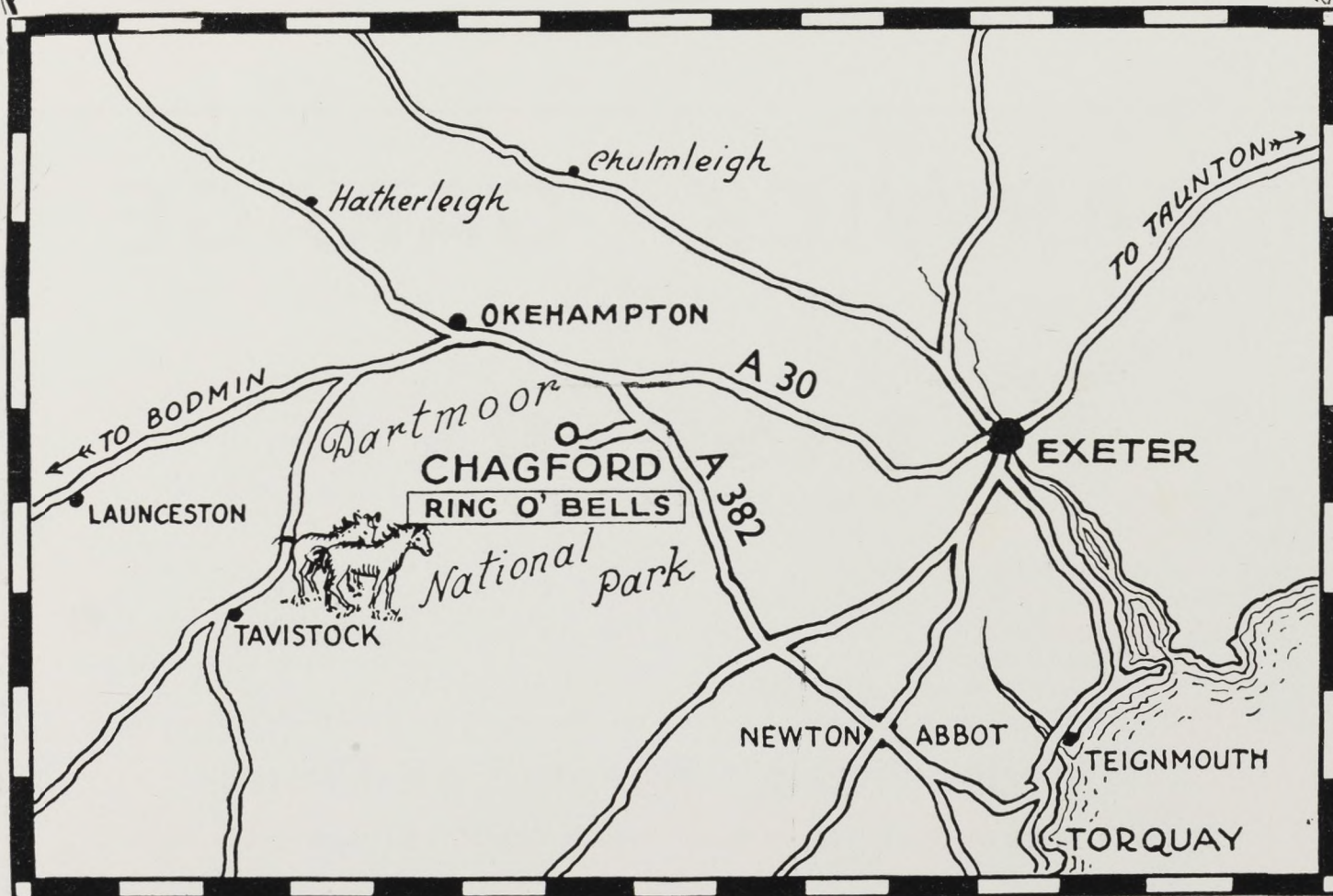
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