THE Lagonda

No. 55 Summer 1966

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THE Lagonda MAGAZINE

Issue No. 55 **Summer 1966**

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

Editorial Committee:
A. W. MAY, M. GABER, J. W. T. CROCKER, M. H. WILBY

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

FRONT COVER: Real motoring—painting by F. Gordon Crosby. Reproduced by courtesy of the *Autocar*.

NOTES, NEWS AND COMMENTS

ON THE COMPETITION SIDE CONGRATULATIONS ARE extended, a bit late in the day, to Tony Skipper for his 2nd place, to John Abson for his 2nd place and to Peter Weir for his 3rd place all at the V.S.C.E. April Silverstone meeting. For Peter this was his first competition and he reckoned it was to get him into form for Curborough. Nine Lagondas took part in this meeting and Abson recorded the best lap in 1'.26.6" and as Campbell's M45 was next fastest in 1'.30.6" it looks as if the smallest Lagonda will soon hold the club lap record!

* * * * *

Way back in 1960 a rebuild maniac's wife described the painful process which seemed as bad in Kuala Lumpur where it was taking place as it does in this country. Two years later D. H. Mitchell writes to send photos of the finished article, Ron Armstrong's superb LG45 D.H.C. It looks a fair match for Richard Hare's similar car but unfortunately as the photos are in colour they cannot be reproduced in the magazine. Send some black and white Ron and we can keep you happy with more photos in the magazine of your favourite model, but perhaps by this time the car has got dirty!

* * * * *

As is known the special bodied V-12 (see Spring/Autumn, 1965 issue) has now passed into Brian Morgan's hands and will be restored to its former glory. Any information about this car will be gratefully received but as the Chassis No. is 14117 it rather dispels the rumour that it was the spare 1939 Le-Mans car. Not sure that there ever was a spare, but the cars that ran in this race were 14089 and 14090.

* * * * *

MIKE WILBY knows of a fine 1927 Lagonda (described by the owner as a "beautiful creature") awaiting a "genuine really interested buyer".

* * * * *

It is a pleasure to report that our President, ARTHUR W. FOX still makes good progress from his long illness and whilst he does not feel fit enough to take the wheel of his Le Mans winning car of 1935, he follows all Club matters with great interest. We send him our best wishes and trust he will soon be restored to health.

Some of our younger members may not realise that Arthur Fox prepared and raced 2-litre and 3-litre cars before he produced the highly successful M45 R's of 1934/35 and the two- and four-seater LG45 R's of 1936/37.

HANDBOOKS

Both Owner's Handbooks and Workshop Manuals for the David Brown 2.6-litre and 3-litre Lagondas are now available from the Club Secretary. The price of these books is 45s. each, including postage and packing charges.

The Club is sorry to learn of the death of one of its members, William J. Chesher of Sutton Coldfield, Warks. Condolences are extended to his widow, Mrs. Olive Chesher.

* * * * *

The Editor is desperately short of material for the next magazine. All contributions gratefully received.

"Have you two nearly finished discussing Lagondas or had I better start thinking about breakfast?"

NORTHERN NOTES

from Herb Schofield

FIRSTLY A MISTAKE IN THE CLUB FIXTURE LIST. There is no Social Rally planned in October, unless of course somebody is prepared to organise one!?

Northern Dinner/Dance and Prizegiving Monk Fryston Hall

A splendid function this with an attendance of near sixty which must be somewhere near the Northern record. Monk Fryston Hall is a splendid venue which contrasted vividly with the rather dismal affair we had in 1965.

Lancs. Spring Social

This unfortunately had to be cancelled because R.A.C. permission could not be obtained—pity really for the actual day it was scheduled to be run was perfect.

V.S.C.C. April Silverstone

As this meeting is reported in the V.S.C.C. Bulletin and possibly elsewhere in this issue I will not enter into too much detail. Four Northern members raced, Weir who got a 3rd in his LG45 Special, Abson, who managed a 2nd in the big Rapier, Schofield a 3rd in the LG45, and David Hine also in the LG45.

One must unfortunately now agree with Elliot Elder that at the moment 4½-litre Lagondas are rather slow compared with the Elder/Abson 1500 c.c. Rapier which was lapping Silverstone something like 10 seconds quicker. However there must be some consolation in the fact that 4½-litre competitors do in fact drive their cars to and from meetings (if only because they can't get trailers large enough!), use them for other types of competition, and even sometimes for ordinary motoring.

V.S.C.C. Curborough Sprint May 15th

As the B.D.C./Lagonda Club Sprint would be on the following weekend nine Lagondas turned up to compete at this meeting for some valuable practice. None of the Lagondas featured in the awards, however, here are the times:—

A. MCCALL, S/C Rapier Special	45.4 secs.
D. R. HINE, LG45 Competition Car	46.4 secs.

H. L. SCHOFIELD, LG45 Competition Car	46.8 secs.
M. LEO, S/C 2-litre	47.2 secs.
M. SHERWOOD, Rapier	48.6 secs.
J. ORGAN, Rapier	50.8 secs.
A. BROWN, 2-litre Special	53.2 secs.
L. N. BUCK, Rapier	53.6 secs.
J. A. WOOD, Rapier	54.6 secs.

B.O.C./Lag Club Sprint May 21st

Fortunately this meeting did receive the support it deserved, and although held in fairly dismal weather conditions was a great success and extremely well organised.

It was obvious down on the starting line that there was some sort of rivalry between the Weir LG45 Special and the Hine/Schofield LG45 Special which ultimately resulted in victory by the latter car—but by a very small margin.

The most outstanding performance of all was surely made by Maurice Leo and the blown 2-litre who came 4th in a class made up of 4½-litre cars. Incidentally this car was faster than all but four of the pre-war Bentleys.

Bits and Pieces

BRIAN GREEN of Birkenhead buys the ex Doc Evans M45 Tourer (featured in No. 1 of Northern Cars and Faces). RICHARD WEIR (16/80) of Huddersfield announces his engagement. Over in Hyde ALAN BROWN is prepared to sell very cheaply a complete running LG45 chassis which he has rebuilt.

We are promised a write-up by DEARDEN-BRIGGS on his 3-litre rebuild, or "How to have a child without really trying". The article should contain all sorts of useful information, like—where you can get cheap leather, chroming, carpet binding, etc., etc.

As I write two famous cars will probably have changed hands. The TOM GOODMAN 1934 Fox and Nichol Team Car M45R, and LORD DUNLEATH'S LG45R Team Car which I understand has been acquired by Jack Broadhead of Cheshire who intends to restore it.

THE NEXT MAGAZINE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER. COPY/ PHOTOGRAPHS TO BE SUBMITTED BY SEPTEMBER 29th PLEASE.

COMPETITION NOTES

A GREAT DEAL HAS HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST notes were written at the start of the season, everything seemed to be taking place in May. The present lull in activity later during the indifferent summer is very gratefully welcomed by the hon. comp. sec. who is trying to finish this article and dash of for two weeks rest.

Looking at the list of award winners in the last magazine, it is not surprising to find that at least five names are again featuring very strongly in this season's competitions. The ever popular curtain-raiser is the V.S.C.C. Pomeroy Trophy in which five Lagondas took part, namely Leo V-12 Rapide, Crocker V-12 Rapide, Elliott LG45 Special, Campbell M45, and Mahony LG45. It should be recorded here that Maurice Leo's time for the standing quarter-mile was 14.68 secs., well over a second faster than the next quickest car—Corner's 250 GT Ferrari. A very good time indeed. The other Lagonda times were: Crocker 16.19, Elliott 18.93, Campbell 19.60 and Mahony 20.47. All these times are very good and should be of interest to readers who own similar cars and think they go fast!

The first vintage Silverstone meeting saw eleven Lagondas compete, with the Hine/Schofield Special going very well. One stranger in the camp was McV. Weston's LG6 Special which has now appeared twice this season and looks a likely contender for an award later in the year. Abson's car was very fast as usual, but too heavily handicapped to do any good. Nice to see Jack Kibble's team car appear at this event, a pity as don't have the pleasure of seeing this car more often.

Numbers for the Southern Rally were down a little this year, with 20 starters. The weather on this occasion was foul, but it says much for the enthusiasm of the competitors, as they all turned up bar one. Maurice Leo again won with the V-12, very closely followed by Ron Kerridge in his Rapier.

The big event of the year, the B.D.C./L.C. Curborough Sprint has been fully reported already. It was a great success, and the organisers are very pleased that so many cars entered this event (27 starters). The laurels go to David Hine in the Special, with the fastest pre-war Lagonda time of 45.55 secs., only three seconds

Maurice Leo in the V-12 accelerating hard in the 1965 Brighton Speed Trials. **Photo:** *Autocar.*

slower than Leo in the V-12. The circuit at Curborough is very tight, a sure test of driving skill rather than brute force. Rapiers appeared in great strength, no less than eight cars, and must be congratulated for giving the club such good support.

The following day, Sunday 22nd May, saw a team of four Lagondas try their skill against the Bentleys at the B.D.C. Inter-Regional Challenge Driving Test Competition, also at Curborough. This was an invitation, purely to provide interest in comparative performances and was not part of the competition proper. The team consisted of Ron Kerridge, Rapier; Maurice Leo, 2-litre(s); David Hine, M45 tourer; and Herb Schofield in the LG45 Special. These four cars are fairly representative of the types of Lagonda, and they acquitted themselves very well indeed, with the final results placing them 3rd overall. It is hoped that next year we shall be able to arrange a full weekend with the B.D.C., with the Lagonda club itself raising several teams of four cars from different regions to compete directly against the Bentleys. Finally, congratulations to all those who took part and made such a success of the weekend, and thanks to the B.D.C. for all their very efficient organisation.

By the time you read these notes the B.D.C. Silverstone meeting on 20th August will have been and gone. It is hoped a good turnout of Lagondas will be forthcoming, and judging by the number of cars that have already shown themselves this year, some new ones amongst them, the entry for the Lagonda race could be very interesting. Do not forget the other big date this season:—12TH NOV. NOVEMBER HANDICAP— Details nearer the time in the newsletter.

The trip round the Aston-Martin-Lagonda factory at Newport Pagnell has been well supported, with just about the right number asking for a place in the party. If another two dozen people would enjoy a visit, this could be arranged again next year. There does not seem to be any demand for a purely social meeting of Lagondas this year, so you will have to wait until the A.G.M.!

J.C.W.

Hull and East Riding Members' Notes

MOST IMPORTANT. OUR PUB MEET HAS BEEN changed. It is now in the Duke of York, village of Skirlaugh, nine miles north-north-east of Hull. Still on the last Tuesday of the month.

Members enumerated in the last issue of the magazine report little progress. The maintenance, tuning, repair and building of Lagondas is taking even more time than they envisaged.

They might have made an impressive turnout in the Yorkshire Treasure Hunt if it had been held, but they would have been mounted on several different breeds. They now hope to make their impressive turnout at the forthcoming Northern Driving Tests.

Henry Coates (with Vivienne and second XK140) was joint second in the Border Rally, which was won by Gordon Rider in his smart white M45R. Gordon also lives in Yorkshire and is an Old Boy of our local meetings.

Roy Paterson entered for the B.D.C.-Lagonda Curborough Sprint, and V.S.C.C. Oulton Park.

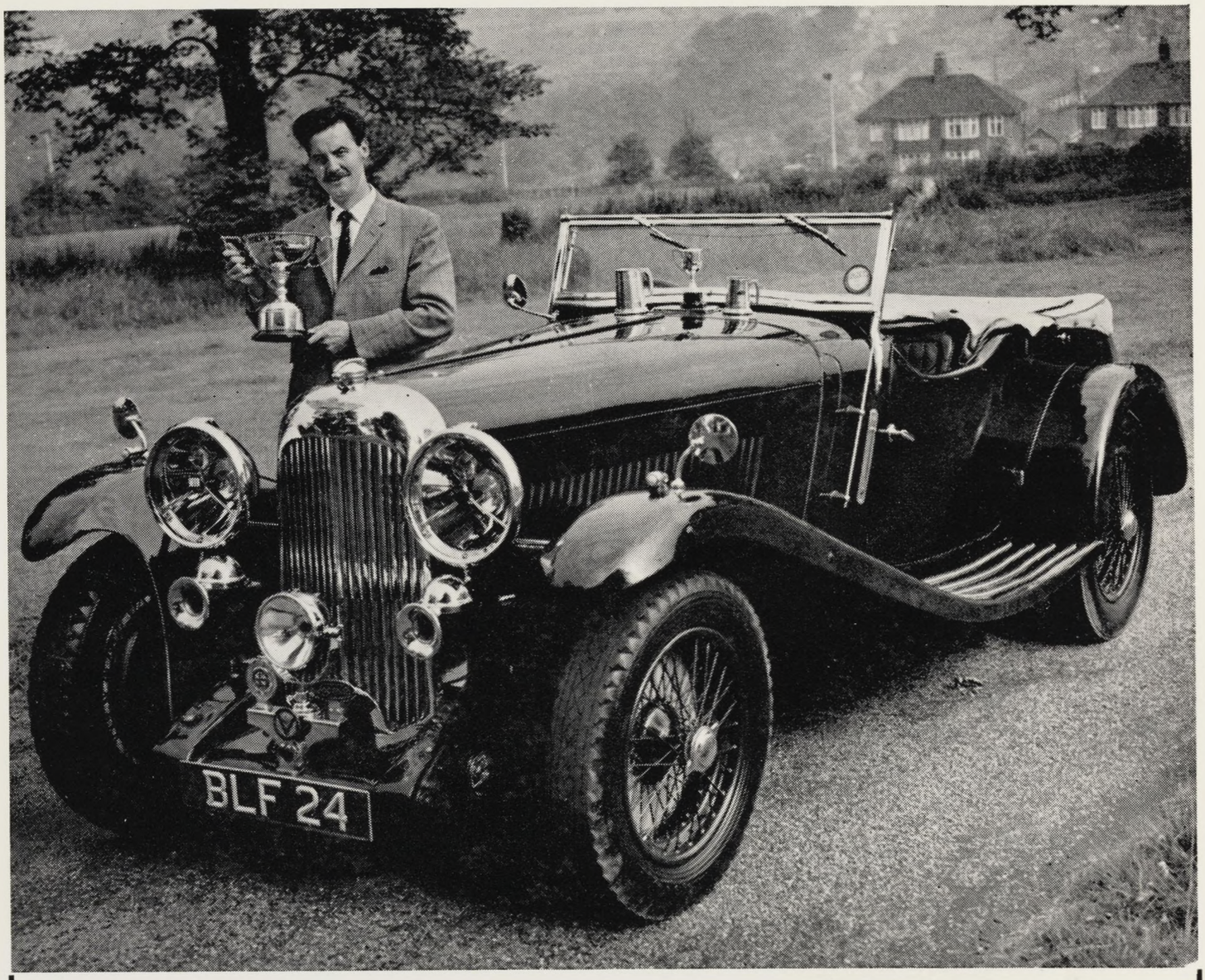
"HERMES★"

★ FOOTNOTE

This seemed a good nom-de-plume, as to the writer's unsophisticated mind Hermes was the winged messenger of the gods, Mercury and all that, patron of travellers, super-salesman of N———— B————, quicksilver. In addition, to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, Hermes is god of science and eloquence. This choice of name appeared to be quite appropriate and proper. Alas, the local classical scholars knew otherwise, and tactfully pointed out Hermes, alias Mercury, alias Mercurius, was not always so proper. Your scribe's thanks to them. He looked up Mercurius in Lempriere. The classical character was also god of thieves, pickpockets, and all dishonest persons. That Classical Dictionary further gives examples of how he appears on monuments. "Some of his statues represent him as a youth. . ." who was most definitely improper! So no more of that.

The writer respectfully prefers to ignore the local classical scholars and begs you, dear readers, to do likewise. Please regard Hermes not as a personality, but as the convenient initials—more or less—of *H*ull and *E*ast *R*iding *M*ember*S*. For the benefit of overseas readers should it be added that the county of Yorkshire, being England's largest, is divided administratively into thirds (North, East, and West)? The term Riding is a corruption of thirding.

James Crocker looks confident in the V-12. **Photo: Charles Green.**



NORTHERN CARS & FACES

No. 7

GEOFF THORNEYCROFT

Proud indeed of this specimen 3½-litre tourer Geoff Thorneycroft has gained numerous *concours* awards in recent years with this immaculate example of the Lagonda breed.

(A Road Test report on this type appears elsewhere in the magazine.)

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CLASSIC EXAMPLE

The Briggs Cunningham Automobile Museum

BY JOHN TOMERLIN

THERE WAS A GAME.

We played it when we were in our twenties; young, and about to be old. We played it late at night, usually; while Tomorrow was still a promise.

The Game had no name, but there were rules:

"If you could have six cars—"

"No, ten. Six is too hard."

"Ten, then. If you could have ten cars, all in perfect running order . . ."

Even ten was too difficult, of course. There had to be a modern sportscar. Two of them, in fact; one to race. There had to be a Rolls-Royce of some sort. And a Ferrari. In addition, each of us claimed spiritual kinship to a classic; some car we felt, not very secretly, expressed our inner selves: our automotive alter egos. In the one case it was a Duesenberg SJ, in another the Mercedes Benz SSK, and for me it was the Alfa Romeo P3 because I identified, unashamedly, with Nuvolari. Years ago.

And so, with five of our choices already gone, we viewed with mounting panic the candidates for the remaining places on our lists; the Bugattis and Maseratis and Mercers and Delages, the Hispano-Suizas, the Pierce Arrows, the Jaguars-OSCAs-Stutzs . . .

"Maybe we should make it twelve," someone suggested.

This was The Game. It began whenever one of us encountered, during the day, the flash of color, rattle of chains, whir of "Non-Skids" or roar of exhaust that sparked our car-parched brains and sent us off with imaginations smouldering. As well as I can remember, we never finished one.

There were last-minute inspirations, and reluctant crossings out, and sudden recollections of the indispensable; our lists grew long, ran off the page and into the early hours of morning; we ended arguing the relative merits of the Bugatti Royale and the Rolls Silver Ghost, before climbing into our Volkswagens and driving home.

I hadn't thought of The Game for a long time, but it came back to mind the other day when I discovered that, all the time we'd been playing with pencils and paper and stale cups of coffee, someone else had been playing for real: With the cars whose names we spoke and wrote so reverently. A continent away, he was buying them, and restoring them, and putting them into his garage. When he felt like it, he was driving them into town, and along the country roads of Connecticut, and in races, too, sometimes. Just as we did. In our dreams.

His name wasn't well known at the time. At any rate, we didn't know it, and didn't know what he was doing. I'm glad we didn't, just as I'm glad, now, that he did it. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for me to stand, a few days ago, surrounded by all those magical machines; the incarnation of our whilom lustings. Otherwise, the doors would not have opened, a few weeks ago, on the Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum.

REPRINTED BY KIND PERMISSION OF 'ROAD & TRACK'

The Museum is in Costa Mesa, Calif., 40 freeway miles south of Los Angeles, within smelling distance of the sea. It is a new building, erected specifically for its function; 30,000 square feet of floor space, lighted by hundreds of yards of fluorescent tubing; green-carpeted aisles and conveniently-placed ashtrays and soft background music—a $350,000 tribute to modern architecture. And to automotive history.

For they are here, all the half-known idols of youthful yearning; all here, and all glitteringly, *unimaginably* real. My friend's Duesenberg is here, standing two-thirds of the way down the north wall, girdled on three sides by a golden rope so that it may be admired from every angle. It's the 1935 model SJ (supercharged) Sport Roadster; one of the two short chassis models built, and formerly owned by Gary Cooper. It is in the process of restoration, now, but even now it is every inch a monarch. My friend would have been quite satisfied with it.

And the Mercedes-Benz SSK is here. Built in 1929, its box-like hood sprouts great chromium

flex tubes from the 6-cylinder supercharged engine. Gleaming white and silver, with the proud three-pointed star rising from the radiator, it looks just the way it did in pictures we'd seen of it—or of its sister version, the SSKL—winning all the major sports car races of Europe. Standing beside it, lost in contemplation of its angular, functional beauty, I can almost envy my friend's selection; very judicious, yes, an excellent choice, but—

But my Alfa is here to reassure me. The very one, the 1934 model—2.3-liter, 8-cylinder supercharged, with Zagato body atop GP chassis and running gear—and I'm pleased to see that Mr. Cunningham is taking good care of it for me. It looks as sleek and wiry and whippet-like (brilliant red, with those *enormous* finned-aluminium brake drums) as ever: As potent as the day Tazio won the Mille Miglia with one like it.

And all the others are here, the cars that inspired our Game, that we talked about and argued about and accepted or rejected with such penniless presumption: The 1930 "Blower" Bentley, 4.5-liter Sport Roadster; one of *six* Bentleys (a car to which Mr. Cunningham is partial) on display, including the 1929 "Speed 6," the 1931 "Corsica" 8-liter, and the 4¼-liter Rolls Bentley that E. R. Hall raced at Le Mans in 1936.

There is a Type 55 Bugatti, royal blue and raven-wing black; a 2.3-liter, 8-cylinder supercharged roadster that is beautiful right down to the sculptured and polished steering rods and arms—the work of a Michelangelo, in metal. Tazio Nuvolari drove this one, too; it would be possible to dislike the man.

The most notable American contributions to the art—in addition to the "Duesy"—were made by Packard, Pierce Arrow, Mercer, Simplex, Stutz, Marmon and Cadillac. (Oh, I'm sure there were others, but these will do for a cross-section—and they are the cars represented in the Cunningham collection.) Most are open-body versions, phaetons or roadsters, because, as their owner explains, such models were built in smaller numbers, and are rarer. Perhaps, too, because they are often the most beautiful. There is a Locomobile, and a Rauch & Lang, and the engine from a steamer—implements that, for me at least, have more historical importance than personal appeal—but there is also a 1932 Lincoln; a double-cowl Phaeton, a car that is so vast, and so regal, and so immoderately lovely that the eyes burn, looking at it. (I will not try to describe something that happens, essentially, in the heart.)

The European cars pose equal problems of description. After the Rolls and Rolls Bentleys come the Hispano-Suizas, four of them; the "King Alfonso" model XIII, called the first real sportscar in history; the 1923 Hisso that is believed to have raced at Indianapolis: the "Boulogne 45" boat-tail roadster, and a V-12 powered 1932 Phaeton. Cars to keep you awake at night.

And towering, literally, above them all, the Bugatti Royale. Only seven were built, six are in existence, one is part of the Cunningham collection. Bugatti intended it to be the most expensive car in the world, and it was, and is. It's one of the largest, as well; a wheelbase 170 inches long, an 8-cylinder engine (12,768 cubic centimeters) that looks like an aluminium-alloy

Permanent Exhibits

Alfa Romeo 1934 Mille Miglia roadster
American Underslung 1911 sports tourer
Ballot 1919 straight-eight GP car
Bentley 1929 Speed Six
Bentley 1930 4·5 sport roadster
Bentley 1931 8-liter sport touring
Bugatti Type 41 Royale with Kellner body
Bugatti Type 55 2·3-liter roadster
Bugatti Type 52 electric "baby bug"
Bu-Merc straight-8 Buick-powered Mercedes
Cadillac 1931 V-16 Fleetwood roadster
Cadillac 1950 Coupe de Ville Le Mans car
Cunningham 1920 sports roadster
Cunningham 1950 "le Monstre" Le Mans car
Cunningham 1951 C-1 Chrysler-engined prototype
Cunningham 1953 C4R
Cunningham 1955 C6R—last of the marque
Delage 1927 1·5-liter, 8-cylinder GP car
Duesenberg 1935 Murphy-bodied roadster
Ferrari 166 roadster—first Ferrari imported to U.S.
Hispano-Suiza 1912 King Alfonso model
Hispano-Suiza 1923 engine and chassis
Hispano-Suiza 1928 6-cylinder Boulogne 45
Hispano-Suiza 1932 V-12 phaeton
Jaguar 1955 D-type Le Mans car
Lagonda 1940 V-12 drophead sedan
Lincoln 1932 V-12 double cowl phaeton KB 1288
Locomobile 1924 sports tourer
Maserati birdcage
Mercedes 1914 4·5-liter 4-cylinder GP car
Mercedes 1924 6-liter, 6-cylinder model 28-95
Mercedes Benz 1929 38-250 SSK roadster
Mercer 1912 35C Raceabout
Osca 1954 1·5 liter Sebring winner
Packard 1929 roadster
Packard 1933 V-12 phaeton, Dietrich body
Peugeot 1913 GP car
Pierce Arrow 1915 roadster
Raush & Lang 1912 electric
Rolls-Royce 1914 Silver Ghost tourer
Rolls-Royce 1914 Touring Colonial Model
Rolls-Royce 1931 Continental roadster
Rolls-Royce 1937 P-III sedan
Rolls Bentley 1933 4·5 sports roadster
Rolls Bentley 1939 4·5 saloon
Rolls Bentley 1952 Continental
Simplex 1914 roadster
Stutz 1932 DV32 Super Bear Cat
Vauxhall 1922 30-98

dam—it is not an automobile at all, it is a monument.

The history of racing's "Golden Age" is detailed in examples of Grand Prix cars: A 1919 Ballot that raced at Indy, a 1913 Peugeot (with the first double-overhead-cam engine), a 1.5-liter supercharged Delage that was built in 1927 and will top 140 m.p.h. today, and a 4.5-liter 1914 Mercedes that was a member of the fabled "White Team."

Perhaps, is we'd been able to walk through the Cunningham Museum while playing The Game, we could have made direct comparisons, more informed decisions.

Or perhaps we'd have gone mad.

Yet these are only a few of the 50-odd cars on display. There are several late-model machines on the floor, for contrast, and there is a good sampling of Briggs Cunningham's personal cars; a kind of motor history of the man himself.

There is a Wills St. Clair like the one he drove while in college, and a 1929 Packard—one of three prototype models sold that year—which he had modified into a sportster. (He describes the 120-m.p.h. demonstration ride he and his friends were given at the factory proving grounds—in heavy fog!—as though it happened yesterday.)

The quite ordinary-looking 1950 Cadillac coupe on exhibit is the one he entered at Le Mans, the first year he raced there, and near it stands the companion car, the special-bodied roadster that the French christened "le Monstre." Four of the actual "Cunningham" cars are shown, built between 1950 and 1955, when he was a regular competitor in the "*Vingt-quatre Heures.*"

There is even an ancient family carriage, a "brougham" of indeterminate age, which appears on the point of turning to dust, and being sucked up by the building's efficient air-conditioning system.

In a way, these personal mementoes are a key to the exhibit: It is less a museum in the usual sense than a private collection. The representation of one man's love of automobiles. The cars have been chosen with taste and judgment; an exceptional eye for that rare and exquisite combination of beauty and ability. They are, in short, the kind of machines that any man who had the means might hope to find in his "dream stable." To own; not merely to admire, but to use.

This was the criterion that guided Mr. Cunningham in his purchases—the majority of which were made in the years after World War II, until the present. Originally, he'd had no thought of showing them. That decision came recently—largely at the urging of Mrs. Cunningham—was acted on with typical dispatch, and resulted in the opening of the museum to the public this past February.

In charge of the collection is Mr. John Burgess, a man whose philosophy seems attuned to that of his employer: Both respect the authenticity and integrity of the automobiles displayed. The cars have, in all cases, been restored according to factory specifications—even to the point of selecting from the original paint schemes offered. Many of the racing machines bear the scars of their most recent combat (the pits around le Monstre's radiator cowling were dug by the gravel at Le Mans).

"This is the state of the art as it *was*," Mr. Burgess says. "We haven't tried to improve on it . . . . We think it was pretty good to begin with."

Before long, a new exit ramp from the freeway will make the Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum a bit easier to locate. Meanwhile, one must take the trouble to locate Red Hill Ave. in Costa Mesa, turn onto it, and drive out to Baker St. The trouble is well rewarded, for this collection is unique.

And it is likely to get better:

"There are a few things I still want," says Briggs Cunningham. "I'd like to get hold of a 16-valve, boat-tailed Stutz Blackhawk. I'd *buy* it, of course . . . . I want to keep most of the exhibit privately owned, so people will know the cars are here when they come to see them . . ."

Now, there is a man who knows how to play The Game!

TUNING THE 4½-LITRE LAGONDA AND INVICTA

By L. S. Michael, O.B.E.

PART TWO

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A modification much favoured by tuners today is to lighten the flywheel considerably. This technique, which is undoubtedly effective in increasing acceleration, was never used either by the works or Fox and Nicholl. On one engine of mine I not only had holes drilled all over the flywheel to lighten it, but removed the quite heavy vibration damper too, in order to reduce inertia and get increased acceleration. This was the first engine which ever disintegrated under me in a race, and be it noted that I have used higher compression-ratios since, in other engines, without serious blow-ups. My present LG.45 Sanction III engine's flywheel is lightened by having a number of 1¼ in. holes in it, disposed in a symmetrical pattern, but the vibration damper has been retained. The engine has been carefully statically and dynamically balanced, and so far it has withstood two seasons' competition use. It is most desirable to have these engines balanced as far as possible. The whole assembly—crankshaft, con.-rods, pistons, flywheel and clutch complete—should be sent to a reputable firm specialising in this work. I have no precise figures to show exactly what is gained by reducing the flywheel weight (top speed is not affected), but there is no doubt that a lighter flywheel makes the step-off noticeably more rapid, and due to the fact that there is a more instantaneous response to the throttle, gear changes are faster, too. The standing ¼-mile in my car at Silverstone, taken at the B.D.C. meeting, August 1958, was 16·46 sec. The track was not perfectly dry, and the course marked out was not dead flat and had an appreciable curve in it. The best figure from the pre-war road tests was 18·4 sec. for the LG Rapide.

If more power is being sought, regardless of the time and trouble involved, attention to both inlet and exhaust arrangements is desirable, but even if neither of these can receive attention, a worth-while improvement in performance is obtained at low cost by raising the compression-ratio. This can be done when a decoke is due, by the inexpensive method of machinging the cylinder head. If really large increases in compression are desired it may be necessary to machine the block as well. The reason being, that it is not advisable to run too far into the sparking plug holes, which are located rather low down on each side of the cylinder head. The only snag which these modifications will occasion is the need to elongate the holes in the water transfer plates to allow for the now slightly reduced distance between their studs. At the same time an extra water transfer can be made between the back of the head and the block. This is very easy to do. It became standard on the LG.45 Sanction III and helps to keep cylinders 5 and 6 cool. This modification, though desirable, is not essential. It is a comforting thought that if you do not like the result a compression plate can be inserted between detachable cylinder block and the crankcase to reduce the compression-ratio to any desired figure. This was done during the war to a number of Rapides which found the low-octane fuel then available rather indigestible.

Special high-compression pistons can be made instead of machining, but this is much more costly, *unless* a complete engine overhaul is to be undertaken. The price of such pistons from the firms who specialise in that work is about the same as the standard ones available from the usual sources.

In calculating compression-ratios use the method advocated in popular books on tuning, usually involving the pouring of liquid into the cylinder head from a burette, thus discovering the combustion space at t.d.c. Then, by calculation, arrive at the combustion space required for the new compression-ratio, measure that volume of liquid into the burette, pour it into the cylinder head and scribe a line at the liquid level, making due allowance for the meniscus; thus obtaining the level to machine to. This is to be checked several times, and anyone who has tried it will recall the pretty pattern on the cylinder head where he has scribed lines at the different levels after each re-check!

Most of these pistons are not flat topped nor absolutely flush with the block, therefore such operations cannot give useful information if done on the head alone. If it is attempted with the head *in situ*, on the assumption that the piston

rings will prevent a downward escape of liquid, it will be found that owing to the disposition of the sparking plugs it is impossible to get accurate results.

I suggest a different approach. It is easy to calculate the compression space required for various ratios as the formula

$$CR = \frac{V + CS}{CS}$$

gives this, where CR = compression ratio; V = swept volume; CS = compression space. A table showing the answers for the various compression ratios is given below. With a cylinder of 88·5 mm. bore the amount of machining required to reduce the volume by 1 c.c. is 0·0063 in. These cylinder heads to not reduce in bore until after the plug holes penetrate the head, so one is not involved in problems occasioned by the cylinder-head shape.

In order to do the calculations required, it is necessary to know the accurate swept volume of one cylinder. This, one would imagine, was easily determined by dividing the capacity of the engine by six. Unfortunately a large number of different figures have been published for this engine, 4,467 c.c. and 4,453 c.c. being the most popular. In all the Invicta publications, and the Lagonda Motor Show catalogue of October 1933 describing the 1934 models, the capacity is said to be 4,467 c.c. This agrees with the figures published by Henry Meadows Ltd., who made the engine; one might think that they should know? Nevertheless, for the 1935 TT and on all subsequent Lagonda race entry forms, still available for inspection, the capacity is declared as 4,453 c.c., and from 1935 onwards this figure is repeated in Lagonda catalogues, while Meadows continue to use the figures 4,467 c.c. The bore and stroke given by both is 88·5 × 120·64 mm. and it must be emphasised that no other measurements were put out by the makers of the engine. Since Meadows have taken the trouble to give the stroke to two decimal places of millimetres it is reasonable to suppose that the bore is given with equal accuracy and that they represent the designed dimensions. The mathematically minded may care to work it out for themselves. The answer is 4,453 c.c. The weight of evidence seems to favour 4,453 c.c. and for the purpose of the following calculations this is accepted as correct. Even if one is working on an engine bored to the maximum safe oversize, the effect will not be enough to cause any trouble as far as the degree of machining contemplated here is concerned.

By far the majority of 4½-litre Lagondas are fitted with 6·68-to-1 pistons. These were always fitted as standard after 1935, and were supplied as replacements even when earlier engines were reconditioned. Most Rapides had 7·0-to-1 pistons and these can be recognised as compared with the standard ones because they project distinctly higher above the block face. These 7·0-to-1 pistons were extremely difficult to obtain after 1947 and the chances are that any engine overhauled after that date had 6·68 pistons in the rebuild. Sometimes an individual had special pistons made, but this is usually known to the owner of the car concerned.

The table below sets out the amount of machining required to raise the compression of a 6·68-to-1 engine to any desired figure up to 8·5-to-1. If your engine is known to have a higher compression, a subtraction sum will show what is needed to alter it to any desired extent.

The early M.45 Lagondas and most Invictas were fitted with 6·0-to-1 pistons. The 6·0-to-1 pistons are usually flat-topped and are distinctly below the top of the bore at t.d.c.

Most 6·68-to-1 pistons are slightly domed and the top of the dome is nearly flush with the top of the block at t.d.c. The ex-W.D. engines which were available immediately after the war had 6·0-to-1 pistons, and a large number were fitted to both Lagondas and Invictas. The ex-W.D. engine can be readily recognised because it has a wide flat sump instead of the narrow deeper sump of the standard engine. In case of doubt it is not difficult to withdraw a piston and compare the height above the gudgeon-pin with that of a standard 6·68-to-1 piston. A large number of those latter are about, and no doubt any of the garages specialising in Lagonda work would let one make this comparison, as indeed would the Lagonda Club spares registrar.

To bring an engine fitted with 6·0-to-1 pistons up to 6·68-to-1 it is necessary to machine 0·097 in. off the block, then the table shown overleaf can be applied.

Usually it is advisable to machine the block if more than 0·096 in. is to be taken off, because of the danger of running into the sparking plug holes. The block of course can be machined on the head and crankcase surfaces. Although there is no likelihood of the valves hitting the pistons I have not given figures above 8·5-to-1. The

Compression ratio	*Compression space in c.c.*	*Machining required to raise compression from 6·68 to 1 in thous. of an inch*
6·68 to 1	133·0	Nil
7·0 „ 1	123·7	0·059 in.
7·1 „ 1	121·7	0·071 „
7·2 „ 1	119·7	0·084 „
7·3 „ 1	117·8	0·096 „
7·4 „ 1	116·0	0·107 „
7·5 „ 1	114·2	0·118 „
7·6 „ 1	112·4	0·130 „
7·7 „ 1	110·8	0·140 „
7·8 „ 1	109·1	0·151 „
7·9 „ 1	107·6	0·160 „
8·0 „ 1	106·0	0·170 „
8·1 „ 1	104·5	0·180 „
8·2 „ 1	103·0	0·189 „
8·3 „ 1	101·7	0·197 „
8·4 „ 1	100·3	0·206 „
8·5 „ 1	99·0	0·214 „

works never went higher than 8-to-1 in their racing engines, though they may have been influenced by the fuel laid down for the races in which they took part. Nevertheless, they did not choose to go higher for the 1936 500-Mile Race, for which any type of fuel was permitted.

Colin Campbell gives some interesting figures relating to engine speeds in the second edition of "The Sports Car", due to be published shortly. His suggested formula for safe *continuous cruising* speeds gives something over 4,200 r.p.m. for the Lagonda.

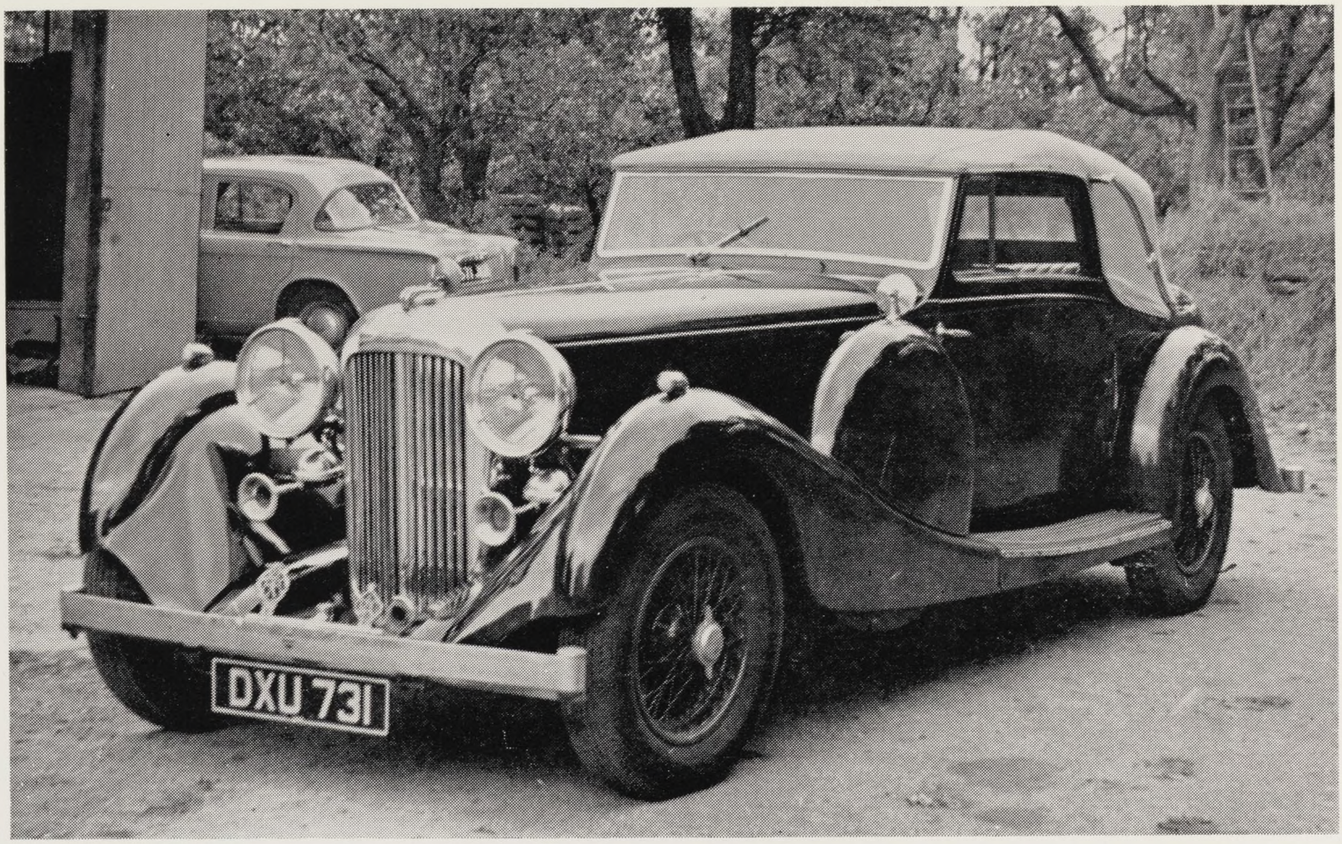
When this was raised with him, he pointed out that his work related to modern engines, where at the present state of knowledge the behaviour of bearing material had become the critical factor. He considered that the con.-rod and torsional vibration of the crankshaft were the limiting factors in the Meadows engine. He also suggested that the big-end bearings tend to crack under compression loads when pulling hard at low speeds. Since he competed with an Invicta which he owned for some time, I have no doubt he was referring to that version of the engine. Such trouble will doubtless occur with the M.45.R and LG engines but they will stand higher stressing than the earlier ones, and have a much more robust con.-rod without separate bearing shells. *Apropos* of the foregoing it is a good idea to have the bearings cast in "racing metal" when such attention becomes due, for although this will slightly increase the rate of wear of the crankshaft it is not serious, and the bearings will stand higher compression better. Racing metal, being harder than ordinary white metal, will hasten the scoring of the crankshaft if used with dirty oil, because abrasive particles take longer to become buried in the bearing material. Therefore, slightly more frequent oil and, when fitted, filter changes are advisable.

It is worth recalling that in 1931 a special engine was built by Meadows, for Raymond Mays' famous white Invicta. According to Mays, alterations were made to the valve gear, valves and pistons, and special four-bolt con.-rods of greater strength and rigidity than standard were designed by Murray Jamieson and Peter Berthon. As the normal Meadows head was retained, there was no room for larger valves. No doubt superior material was used, and the rockers machined all over and lightened as much as possible and lighter cam-followers and push-rods used, as in the Lagonda Rapides of later date.

In spite of continuing to use the standard crankshaft a considerable increase in compression was risked (some put it as high as 10-to-1, but Mr. Crump is unable to confirm this; in fact, he thought it an exaggeration). The engine, on alcohol fuel (Shell M.C.3), ran for an hour on test at 3,900 r.p.m., giving 158 b.h.p. The unit was then stripped for examination, found to be satisfactory, and after re-assembly was installed in the Invicta, where it gave long and trouble-free service in sprints, hill-climbs and Brooklands' races. The power produced is by far the highest recorded by one of these engines. Even so, it is to be noted at what relatively low engine revolutions this was realised.

Because many modern bread-and-butter cars are built to run with compression-ratios substantially over 8·0-to-1, it does not follow that it is safe to do so with a large pre-war power unit. In any case, the higher ratios are usually associated with small cylinders; those vehicles with a cylinder capacity approaching the 4½'s, at present, seldom go much above 8·0-to-1. This ratio in the Meadows engine makes the use of 100-octane fuel desirable, though provided the ignition control and gearbox are used intelligently, 50% 100-octane and 50% premium spirit gives only a little audible pinking.

I feel that 8·0-to-1 is going to the limit for most purposes, and durability may suffer if the full performance thus made available is exploited continuously. An increase in compression to 7·5-to-1 gives a really worthwhile improvement which the owner will find most gratifying. This ratio was offered as an option on the pre-war production Rapides without affecting the guarantee, when fuels available were much more prone to give trouble. It has been used satisfactorily



A fine example of a 1936 LG.45 coupe owned by C. P. Brooks.

for many thousands of miles by quite a number of Lagondas on the road today, and at least three LG.45s are in daily use with substantially higher compressions.

One of these cars did throw a con.-rod but that was attributed to the owner's practice of regularly exceeding 4,000 r.p.m. in the gears when in a hurry, in addition to which it had had a very hard competition life in rallies, sprints and races before the breakdown happened; this same car has recently completed a successful tour to Spain and back.

It is difficult to assess exactly what improvement in terms of b.h.p. is achieved by the various changes in compression-ratio. The brake-test figures available do not give this information clearly; it must be deduced from a mass of notes and correspondence. Furthermore, it is very rare for a compression-ratio change not to be accompanied by other modifications affecting power output.

It does appear that raising the compression from 6·68-to-1 to 7·0-to-1, combined with 6·5 deg. greater ignition advance and fuel to eliminate pinking, gave an extra 5 b.h.p., and although power fell above 3,400 r.p.m. in both cases, the higher-compression engine gave superior power right up to 3,800 r.p.m., at which crankshaft speed it exceeded the power of the 6·68-to-1 unit by 7 b.h.p., in both cases power being well below the peak which remained at 3,400.

In 1934 an engine (M.45/271) was specially prepared for racing: polishing ports, etc., gave it a better performance than standard. During the course of tests its compression was raised from 7·0-to-1 to 7·25-to-1. This increased the power by 2 b.h.p., the engine peaking at 3,600 r.p.m. Thus it seems that an increase of compression-ratio from 6·68 to 7·25-to-1 will produce an extra 9 b.h.p., which is quite appreciable.

When it comes to greater increases in compression-ratio one is on less sure ground. Higher ratios, used with suitable fuel, must produce more power. It is exactly how much more that is difficult to establish. The only significant bench tests that can be identified without doubt relate to an LG.45 engine in 1936. This engine had a compression-ratio of 7·96-to-1 and, in conjunction with 2 in. carburettors, polished head and ports, and a six-branch exhaust manifold, gave approximately 35 b.h.p. more than standard.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN NEXT ISSUE

The 3½-litre Lagonda Sports Tourer

FIVE-HUNDRED MILES ON A SIX-CYLINDER SPORTS Car capable of exceeding 80 m.p.h. Accurate steering and excellent brakes are features.

Controllability, a high crusing speed, adequate power reserve and excellent brakes are notable characteristics of the 3½-litre Lagonda. The touring model, which we tested recently, is priced at £695, with thorough equipment, and provides exceptional value on a "performance-for-money" basis. It will be recalled that this 3½-litre model was introduced only a few months ago to supplement the 3-litre car, and that the specification follows previous Lagonda practice with overhead valves, a four-speed gearbox, a bevel-driven rear axle and Girling brakes. In all its main features the chassis is of much the same design as the 4½-litre Rapide model which did so well in the T.T. race last September; the engine, however, has been developed from the 3-litre model.

Reprinted by courtesy of 'The Motor'

In the course of a trial extending over 500 miles we were decidedly impressed by the capabilities of this 3½-litre car. The high back-axle ratio employed (3·66 to 1) results in a pleasantly low engine speed (2,500-2,800 r.p.m.) when cruising at 60-70 m.p.h., and yet the car remains flexible on this gear when moving at less than 8 m.p.h. The power output and torque are well above the average at low revolution speeds, as witness the acceleration figures obtained from 10 m.p.h. upwards, reproduced in graphical form.

As a special test (not recommended for normal use) we got away from a standstill on the level on top gear. The car moved off quite smoothly —a result which reflects credit upon the sweet action of the clutch.

When driving the car in a more normal fashion, good use is naturally made of the third-gear ratio (4·58 to 1), with which a road speed of over 70 m.p.h. can be reached. The getaway on this gear is very good, as can be seen from our usual acceleration curves.

Right-hand Gear-change

Although not assisted by synchromesh, any competent driver will find it possible to make rapid and quiet changes from top to third and vice-versa by the double-declutching method. The change from second to third requires careful timing. Incidentally, a clutch stop of a fully adjustable pattern is standardised, and the gear lever is placed on the right. Second gear provides a speed range up to 45 m.p.h. and is low enough to enable the car to climb a gradient of about 1 in 5.

From the figures obtained we imagined that the car must be exceptionally light, but subsequently found that it scales 34 cwt. unladen. This is not, of course, excessive, considering that the wheelbase is 10 ft. 3 ins. and the chassis is built on very robust lines for reliable service under "tough" conditions. Nevertheless, the performance indicates that an exceptional output is obtained from the overhead-valve engine, particularly at low speeds. The compression ratio, incidentally, is 7 to 1, so that it is preferable to use an anti-knock fuel. One can, however, run on any No. 1 spirit, provided intelligent use is made of the ignition timing lever.

Good Steering and Braking

Two highly attractive features of this car are the steering gear and the braking system. The driver sits well up to the wheel, with the windscreen close to his eyes, and the steering remains accurate, steady and responsive up to 80 m.p.h. or more. The Lagonda is the kind of car on which one can hold the near-side wheels within a couple of inches of the kerb on a fast left-hand bend with great ease and confidence.

Although light to control, direct in action and self-centring, the steering gear displays practically no tendency to kick back on a rough road. A spring-spoke steering wheel is fitted, at a steep rake, and the Bishop cam-type steering mechanism is employed. The lock is excellent, enabling the car to be turned in one sweep between kerbs only 42 ft. apart.

The Girling braking system employed will already be familiar to readers of *The Motor* as being one of the simplest and most effective pieces of mechanism yet produced. The response is always strictly proportional to the pedal pressure exerted and, under emergency conditions, Tapley meter readings of 95 per cent. can readily be obtained; these indicate a stopping distance of about 31½ ft. from 30 m.p.h. The hand lever is placed on the right and is of the handy racing

pattern in which the ratchet operates only when a button is depressed.

The suspension comprises semi-elliptic springs, Andre frictional shock absorbers and Dunlop Fort tyres of 6-in. section. It gives extremely steady cornering and a wide margin of safety at speed, but is of rather too unyielding a character to be classed as comfortable. The seats are, however, well designed and are fitted with pneumatic upholstery, so that anyone of normal physique can ride or drive in this car for long spells without fatigue.

An attractive feature is the size of the rear tank, which holds 20 gallons of fuel, giving a crusing range of 300-350 miles, according to the conditions. There is a reserve tap under the bonnet, and the two S.U. carburetters are supplied by a double electric pump of the same make.

The body is of the two-door close-coupled type, so that the rear part is not particularly easy of access when the hood and side screens are erected. The all-weather equipment is very nicely carried out and remains watertight even in heavy rain. There is a boot for luggage at the back, which can be used either open or closed.

Equipment Details

The facia carries a range of Smith instruments, including a speedometer, revolution speed indicator, clock, ammeter, oil-pressure gauge, petrol gauge and thermometer. Lucas Projector-type headlamps are fitted and switches are provided which enable either one or both of them to be employed in the dipped position.

Summed up, the 3½-litre Lagonda is a car of character which abounds in practical features of the kind appreciated by the motorist of experience. In these days of high-speed engines the fitting of a big power unit capable of handling high gear ratios is a distinctive characteristic. It would be difficult to select a more appropriate vehicle for fast and lengthy journeys.

CHASSIS DETAILS

ENGINE: Six cylinders, push-rod operated overhead valves, two carburetters, magneto ignition, thermostat-controlled cooling system with pump and fan. 80 mm. × 120 mm. (3,619 c.c.); rating, 23·8 h.p.

GEARBOX: Four forward speeds, righthand control. Ratios: 3·66, 4·58, 7·51 and 12·03 to 1. (A 4·1 axle ratio is fitted to saloon models.)

PERFORMANCE

SPEEDS ON GEARS: Top, 82 m.p.h.; third, 72 m.p.h.; second, 44 m.p.h. Minimum speed, top gear, 7 m.p.h. approx.

TAPLEY PERFORMANCE FIGURES: Maximum pull in lb. per ton on gradient: top, 210 lb.; third, 260 lb.; second, 420 lb. Corresponding gradients climbable at a steady speed are 1 in 10·7, 1 in 8·6 and 1 in 5·3 respectively.

PETROL CONSUMPTION: Driven hard, 16 m.p.g.; at moderate speeds, 17½ m.p.g.

ACCELERATION: Through the gears, from a standstill to 50 m.p.h., 16 secs.; to 60 m.p.h., 25 secs.

BRAKING EFFICIENCIES: By Tapley meter, using the pedal only: from 30 m.p.h., 95 per cent.; from 50 m.p.h., 90 per cent. Corresponding stopping distances are 31½ ft. and 93 ft. respectively.

DIMENSIONS, ETC.

LEADING MEASUREMENTS: Wheelbase, 10 ft. 3 ins.; track, 4 ft. 9 ins.; overall length, 15 ft. 7 ins.; width, 5 ft. 10 ins.

TURNING CIRCLES: Left and right, 42 ft. dia.

WHEELS AND TYRES: 6·00 ins. × 19 ins. Dunlop "90" Fort tyres on centre-lock wire wheels.

WEIGHT: As tested, with two up, 36½ cwt.

PRICE: Open tourer, as tested, £695.

[This Road Test Report first appeared in the 'Motor' in January 1935.]

An Appeal

The magazine, rightly I feel, is the life-blood of the Lagonda Club. Without it members cannot be made aware, in permanent pictorial form, of the Club's many activities. Words and photographs are URGENTLY needed by the Editor in order for the magazine to continue. Please help!

CURBOROUGH SPRINT

IT IS A LONG TIME SINCE THE CLUB HELD SUCH a successful meeting as this. The weather was not particularly kind, but everything else was just right and there was a great turn-out at Litchfield on Saturday, 21st May.

The Curborough Sprint circuit, owned and maintained very efficiently by the Shenstone & District Car Club is the ideal venue from a spectator's point of view because the cars can be seen during their entire run by all the visitors. The course was on flat concrete and of about 900 yards in length and rather narrow and twisty.

The meeting was of course organised by our good friends the Bentley Drivers Club and Lt.-Col. Berthon is to be congratulated on the efficiency of the paper work (for example, every competitor at the end of each run was handed a slip of paper showing his time for that run immediately he returned to the start line. Lists of times were also posted in the paddock during the meeting).

With Mike Wilby back with us again doing the commentating, the visitors were left in no doubt who was on the course, and were treated to a pocket history on each car. Well done, Mike; good to see you back!

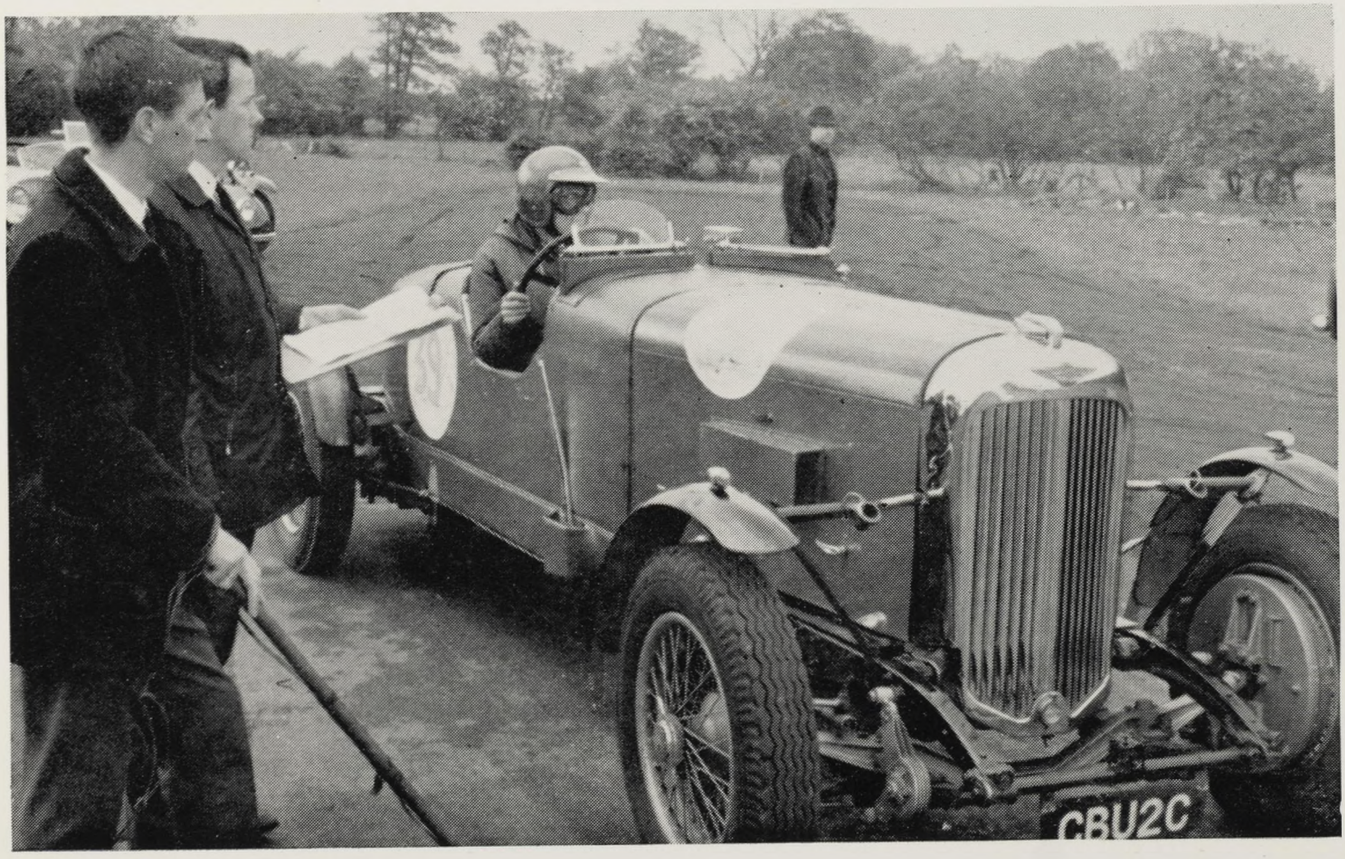
From the exalted and rarified atmosphere of his position as Steward your correspondent was was able to wander over the course and it is hoped these notes will bring you the "best bits".

Out of a total entry of sixty, Bentley had thirty-one (four non-starting), and Lagonda twenty-nine (three non-starting). The Lagonda entry included many new names and altogether was a first-class turnout impressing everyone.

The most exciting incident of the whole meeting occurred in practice when James Crocker in the D.B. V.12, after a preliminary blip of the throttle on the start line, went off like a squirt from a soda-syphon and was equally untidy. Going into the first bend James was well in control, then suddenly all 24 plugs started firing and the car took over, ending up pointing in all directions at once and James' face very red. He made up for it later as you will see.

Most drivers were finding the start difficult

Herb Schofield in the LG.45 Special. **Photo: Charles Green.**



because of a smooth patch. (Well, to give you an idea, even the 2-litres were spinning their wheels!)

Class G. (2- and 3-litre).

Only two runners in this class unfortunately. What has happened to all the 2-litre people? It is an ideal competition car. No other Lagonda ever made can approach it for accuracy in steering and I still maintain that given enough money the car can be persuaded to give a performance similar to a standard 4½ if enough lightness is added.

Alan Brown (54·95) was the better of the two in spite of L. F. Tann's three carburettor head on the 16/80. (55·74).

Class H. (Rapier)

The Rapiers followed, each one being different, ranging from Ron Kerridge's beautifully assembled blown car to Malcolm Sherwood's immaculate Abbott tourer running with enlarged engine (1,200 c.c.'s) and a compression ratio higher than Everest!

In spite of not very suitable plugs Ron managed 48·20 and the only other person near him on first runs was Sherwood with 50·35. At the second bash people were getting the hang of the sharp corners and the Abbott tourer recorded 48·91 that so frightened the blown car that it went onto three cylinders and a recorded slower time.

The Chairman having nobly gone without his lunch to effect a weight reduction had the satisfaction of gaining third place with 50·33 and so keeping at bay John Organ's Scottish special (51·02).

Class J. (3½- and 4½-litre)

Herb Schofield (47·73) gets marks for eagerness. He seemed to be waiting on the start line for hours before practice actually started. A very competent performer with this home-made motor. Herb saw better times on both runs turned in by his stable companion David Hine (45·55) who has now mastered the technique of keeping the power on round corners and took the class award. It is not good letting the car go round corners on its own in competition work—you have to push it round. This car could have an interesting future in competition if a little more "steam" can be found. Incidentally David returned to the start line on one occasion in practice down the wrong lane and was nearly met by the next car coming off the line full bore. Phew!

High marks go also to the Weir (47·52)/Dearden-Briggs (45·87) stable who were both on good form. Indeed but for one gear-change Brian Dearden-Briggs could have taken the award, losing to David Hine by only 0·32 secs. Very exciting it was.

Bryn Edwards (47·93) was there of course with half his motor-car; the important half, and put on his usual business-like performance in the first run, but was unfortunately missing for his second.

High praise to Iain Macdonald (51·98) for throwing round his attractive LG.45 tourer in a smooth performance—softly, softly. R. A. Robarts (47·12) generated more smoke, noise and rubber fumes than acceleration, but he did it with great enthusiasm.

Roy Paterson (51·38) drove the ex-Henry Coates pig-sty Special but it seemed rather tired, and Maurice Leo tried bravely in this class with his supercharged 2-litre (what a glorious noise this car makes!)

Creditable performances were put up by Hurst (47·95), Besant (51·87), Mahony (50·03) and Lancaster (53·57) and congratulations particularly to Alan Ogden (53·15) for coming along in his cooking model—a stately progression Alan, come again.

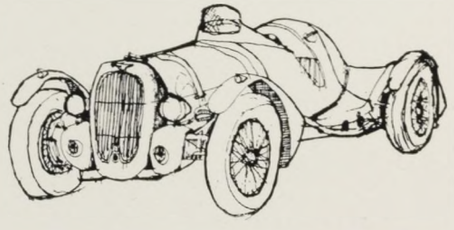
Class M. (Other makes over 2,000 c.c.)

This class was for the really powerful machinery and one felt sorry for the standard XK.120 of Harvey which was outclassed (50·06).

E. N. Conner drove the ex-Hawthorn D-type Jaguar into first place in a really superb piece of driving. Rather flamboyant by some standards but very, very effective (41·57) F.T.D.

Maurice Leo and James Crocker made up the class and were obviously having a private battle; Maurice doing 42·36 secs. and James in the last run of the day making a final and most exciting bid, having now brought the monster under control and got as close as 42·93.

Final reflection. Only one Bentley (the 4½ of B. Mountford) was faster than David Hine (44·48 compared with 45·55). C.S.G.



Slowly back . . .

Right-hand down a bit . . .

Oh! (David Hine at the Southern Rally).

Photos: Arnold Davey.

NOW THE CASE THAT STANDS THE PACE -the tread that's right ahead

THE FANTASTIC **DUNLOP**

SP41

DO YOU drive hard in all conditions? Expect top performance from your car at all times? Are you prepared to pay a little more for the tyre that suits your mood . . . your pocket . . . your type of car? Yes? Then the fabulous new radial-ply textile tyre with the long-life casing and proved safety tread, the Dunlop SP41, is waiting for you. It offers—

- **up to 80% more mileage than conventional tyres**
- **exceptional grip on wet roads or dry**
- **precision steering and braking control**
- **freer running to enhance speed and acceleration**
- **reduced road noise and cornering squeal —less driving fatigue**
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LAGONDA DOWN UNDER

MY LAGONDA M45 1934 MODEL, ENGINE NO. 2641, Car Number Z10892, was purchased by me in August 1963. It is reputed to have been the Lagonda which was imported for the 1934 Sydney and Melbourne Motor Shows. To support this fact, the records of the Motor Registration Branch at Melbourne disclose that this was indeed the first M45 Lagonda to be registered in Victoria. I am the fourth owner of the car, the original owner keeping her for one year, the succeeding owner having her for nearly twenty years. Upon purchase by me, the car was in reasonable mechanical condition, but had suffered heavily over the years on the body side. The woodwork was rotted, and due to the pillarless construction the car appeared to sag in the centre. After much thought it was decided that the existing body would be better scrapped and replaced with a light open touring body.

By December of 1963 the existing body had been removed and the chassis cleaned down to bare metal. The petrol tank was removed and sent away to have various dents removed. The chassis was then undercoated and enamelled and towed to the coachbuilders.

The gentlemen who built the body are well known in Vintage circles in Melbourne, having built replica bodies on quite a number of Vintage and Post-Vintage cars. As they do it on a part-time basis, the Lagonda was with them for a period of six months. It is wooden framed with aluminium panels welded into one piece. It was intended that the body be a replica of the type of open touring bodies fitted to Lagondas in the 30's. The spare wheel is set into the back of the body in a manner similar to the Riley Imp. Over the next six months the car was successfully painted, rewired and upholstered. Throughout this period, the wheels had been checked and spokes replaced where necessary and stove enamelled black. Sundry exterior metal work on the car was replated where necessary and a windscreen off a MG TC was fitted to the car. The magneto and the generator were overhauled and refitted to the car, and eventually in July 1965 the car was registered for use on the road.

At this stage I then discovered all the defects and shortcomings in the work which had been done, and it became necessary to spend the usual amount of time tuning the motor, etcetera. The weight of the car had been reduced by the new body to slightly less than 33 cwt. and the rear springs proved to be a problem, due to the lighter weight on the back. I experimented by removing three leaves from each of the rear springs, filing the springs and coating them with graphite and grease; and also by removing one set of shock absorbers. This caused the springs to work, but I then discovered that the shackles at the rear were fouling the body work and consequently it was necessary to have further alterations carried out to the rear portion of the body. The car appears to be now running quite well, with only minor things requiring attention.

The car made its first competitive appearance at the Vintage Sports Car Club of Australia (Victorian Division) Spring Meeting at Calder Raceway two weeks ago, and despite the inexperience of its driver managed to clock 22.8 seconds for the standing quarter-mile. I am quite satisfied and happy with the performance of the car, in particular with its braking and acceleration, which are sufficient to enable the car to be driven with safety in modern-day traffic conditions, and especially with its effortless cruising on longer trips.

Although the Lagonda Company did not have very energetic agents in Victoria, the whereabouts of five M45's, one M45R, six Rapiers, one LG6 and one Vintage 3-litre Lagonda are known. Of the foregoing, only Barney Goven-Smith's M45 and my car are the only competitive Lagondas in Vintage circles in Victoria. Well may they continue to be active for many more years to come!

GRAEME STEINFORT

CABINET FACE CRISIS OVER HOUSING LAG

Headline in Daily Express

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Colours

Dear Sir—After last year's Vintage (S.C.C.) Oulton Park meeting, I had to repaint the bonnet of my Lagonda which was quite spoiled by the paint used on the brush of the official competition-number painter.

Enid said "Why have it red. Why not a different colour scheme. Why not paint it in official Lagonda colours???" I asked what they were. Well, there's Bugatti Blue, and Alfa Red, and she thought there must be Old Bentley Green. Surely there must be an official colour scheme for our illustrious marque? No? On the spur of the moment she invented one.

"Why not have it", she said, "in maroon and blue like your Lagonda club tie, with just a touch of silver. The tie looks distinguished." What Enid says goes, so that is why my two-seater now wears a bonnet of blue. And come to think of it, the nameplate on an original vintage Lagonda radiator was enamelled in a beautifully rich blue.

I've been trying to persuade other local members to do the same, but they all smile knowingly and re-colour their vehicles in the usual vintage car colours of no particular distinction. If red body and wings, blue bonnet and silver wheels do not display the best pattern of application, what does? Who decided on the club tie anyway?

And while on the topic of colour, why were the Club's Christmas cards printed in that dreadful funereal black? Will our next Christmas cards be the same?

ROY PATERSON.

3-litre Special—UU.5820

Dear Sir—I have recently acquired a 3-litre car No. UU.5820 first registered in June 1929, and intend to restore it to its original condition. However, that is where the problems start for I must first establish in what way this car was in fact "special" for the logbook records it as a "3-litre Special".

The body is in a very poor condition, but it is a tourer with one door only and the body extended to the rear over the fuel tank to form a small boot, to the back of which are fixed two spare wheels. The simple hood framework lies in a recess behind the rear seats when it is down, and the hood folds up and is stowed away separately, leaving an unbroken line from the wind screen to the back of the car.

From the few discussions I have had with those who are knowledgeable on Lagondas it appears that this is an unusual vehicle and I would be most grateful if any Member could provide any further information or photographs so that restoration could be done properly.

W. E. HOGSFLESH,
"Pippins", The Street,
ALBURY, Surrey.

V-12 Sequel

Dear Editor—Following from the letter which appeared on page 30 of the Spring issue of the "Lagonda", I thought you might be interested in the reply I received from Mr. Witten when I wrote to him putting forward several solutions to his predicament. To make sense of it, perhaps I should mention that I offered him some sort of deal involving either a 1935 Horch, a 1924 Delage which was once the property of Count John McCormack or a 1928 Rolls Royce laundalette which was originally owned by Mrs. Cole-

man of mustard fame. As you can see, my offers were too late and the V-12 still languishes in foreign parts.

M. N. BOYDE, Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

"My dear Sir:

I received your charming letter today and have enjoyed it very much indeed.

Would you believe—I cannot see how you might—that I have found that rarest of all bipeds, a cash customer, for my Lagrounda (Yes, yes, I know how to spell it, man, but since the gracious Club can't even spell a member's name, I think it best to retaliate)?

Over here, 8-litre Bentleys are the *thing*, and Horch is a kind of dirty word, though I owned a wonderful one in 1945, whilst in the army in Europe, and thought it a very fine machine. I think I must clasp the cash person to my breast, cherish him, get his money, and go on with our uncivilized American machines.

Cars are not my business either, though they take most of my time and practically all of my money. No apology necessary on that account. I am an admirer of John McCormack's art, and his taste in cars is not so bad either from your description. But I am just not able to muster the necessary enthusiasm for heroic restorations and think I should decline the Delage. I would prefer in any case a machine of more recent date, with a very large power plant. Do 12-cylinder Daimlers with sporting coachwork exist in the U.K.? Interesting.

I have two Duesenbergs—the supercharged J built by Gurney-Nutting for the Maharajah of Indore (or Johore? some confusion here) and a very practical J sedan, plus the Marmon Sixteen Convertible Sedan which we are restoring from the frame up, and a lovely, funny Packard with a queer Victoria body of a sort of patent style by the firm of Waterhouse, which you probably wouldn't know, this being a 1930 Super Eight (Model 745), deemed desirable by the odd cognoscenti of my land.

I have not yet got the Lagonda Club material which carries my advertisement. Since it is always distributed first in U.K., which is appropriate, I had hoped that the poor, old expensive thing might find an English buyer. A man here found out about it and wants to buy it. Yours sincerely, LAURENCE WITTEN".

Dear Sir—I read with interest Henry Coates' letter in the Spring 1966 issue and would certainly agree with him that the 3½-litre and the M45R were announced at the same time. The announcement and full description of these two models appeared in *The Motor* on September 18th, 1934 and about the same time in the *Autocar*. The prices incidentally then were £695 for the 3½-litre tourer and £1,000 for the 4½-litre Rapide. As is well known, both these cars were on 10 ft. 3 in. chassis and had Girling brakes. I would agree with Henry that the Fox & Nichol team cars were also built around the short chassis, this I have confirmed from actual measurements.

To save Henry the task of sorting out his papers, the *Autocar* road test for the 3½ was on the 23rd November, 1934, and the Rapide was road tested by the same journal on the 25th April, 1935. This car which was tested by most of the motoring press at that time did differ slightly in coachwork and was registered CPD 937. This was in more recent years owned for a long time by Harry Wareham and now I believe is in America. Incidentally the windscreen on this car was rather more attractive than the standard one, the only similar car being so fitted was BPK 743 which both Henry and I owned at various times.

Whilst I agree that this car had considerably more weight at the rear than the front, there is no doubt to my mind that this like most other M45R's always feels nose-heavy. I certainly have not noticed this feeling in the ordinary M45's when I have driven them, and certainly not in Bill Michael's later LG45R team car. I am not sure that this proves anything, but having also driven Henry's "red contraption" that felt much more evenly balanced and so perhaps was worth all the trouble after all!

David Crow's letter was also of great interest and I think the Abbot Le Mans replica that he mentions must be the first one that has come to our notice. This car was shown at the 1934 Motor Show and was priced at £1,075.

MIKE WILBY, Hampstead, N.W.3.

LAGONDA SERVICE

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