

THE *Lagonda*

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB

No. 58

Spring 1967



LAGONDA TOURER 1913/1914

- 11.1 Horsepower (RAC rating)
- 1100cc monobloc construction, O/H inlet valves, side exhaust valves

• Built by LAGONDA MOTOR CO. England
FOUNDER
WILBUR GUNN - Lagonda Creek, U.S.A.

OWNED BY
RICHARD J. CALLAWAY
JAY P. KEEPMAN
MADISON, WIS.

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MAGAZINE

Issue No. 58

Spring 1967

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CONTENTS

Notes, News and Comments	2
Allen's Cartoon	3
Dinner-Dance	3
Competition Notes	4
News from America	...	...	6
A Dream comes true as a Boat takes shape			10
Trials and Tribulations	...	...	11
Change of Chairman	...	...	13
The Glove is thrown	...	...	14
Historic Cars—Historic Days	...	...	18
Overland to India	...	...	21
Care and Maintenance of the 2-litre Speed			
Model Lagonda	...	...	26
Letters	...	...	29

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

FRONT COVER: Parking problems in Wisconsin? Or the extreme in "Drive-in banks"? Whatever the reason—there *must* be a story here somewhere Mr. Callaway!

NOTES, NEWS AND COMMENTS

Somewhat belated but nevertheless sincere best wishes go to HENRY COATES and VIVIENNE HARRISON on their marriage (to each other of course!). It is good that after all these years of handling Lagondas, Henry is going to try his hand at women! We think he will be just as successful and as Vivienne is not going to encourage him to give up motoring we shall no doubt see another 4½ special very soon. Vivienne has been a member of the Club for a long time driving a very clean M.G. TD and as a wedding present we understand she gave Henry a sackful of Rapier parts and demands her own car to be assembled before the season starts. Anyway, good luck to them both.

* * * * *

Great news on Competitions. FIRLE HILL CLIMB on the 17th September, will be held after all. This means we will have a complete fixture list and there will be something for everyone. Full details will be found in Competition Notes, but we are pleased to say that all the events to be run with the B.D.C. are taking shape and we need all the entries we can get to beat Hell out of them!!

* * * * *

Not to be missed is the chance to visit BROOKLANDS on the 11th June. This is the first time the track has been opened to the public since racing stopped, and it will be a good day out for the family. See the notice on this page.

* * * * *

BUD HABERSIN continues to send a photographic record of his rebuild on his Rapier, and even allowing for the Florida sunshine it certainly is a gleaming example. The cam covers are finished in crackle black and there is a businesslike 4-branch exhaust manifold and other signs of a well finished rebuild. The final photograph shows it in finished form complete with English number plate (BRU366) standing alongside a +4 Morgan and a TD M.G. Good for you Bud, it looks great and how about some notes for the magazine some time? There is also another Rapier at Westampton Beach, but no photographs yet.

On RAPIER rebuilds it is good to report that the Chairman's car so sadly bent at Oulton Park (not, says the Chairman, by him!) is now on its way to being reinstated. Well at least there is a pile of bent bits in one corner and a pile of better parts being screwed on to his recently acquired stock of spares. It should be in action before the summer is over. All good wishes.

* * * * *

PROFILES. These still continue to flow at six issues a month, and the standard is as good as it ever was. Any moment now numbers 49 to 54 will be issued and if you think that there cannot possibly be any interesting cars left to come you should study the future programme. Each month still continues to give a cross section of new and old, sporting and sedate, with the odd racing car thrown in for good measure. There is still no better value at 2s. each, and you can buy single copies.

By kind permission of the
British Aircraft Corporation

Brooklands Track 60th Anniversary Meeting 1907 - 1967

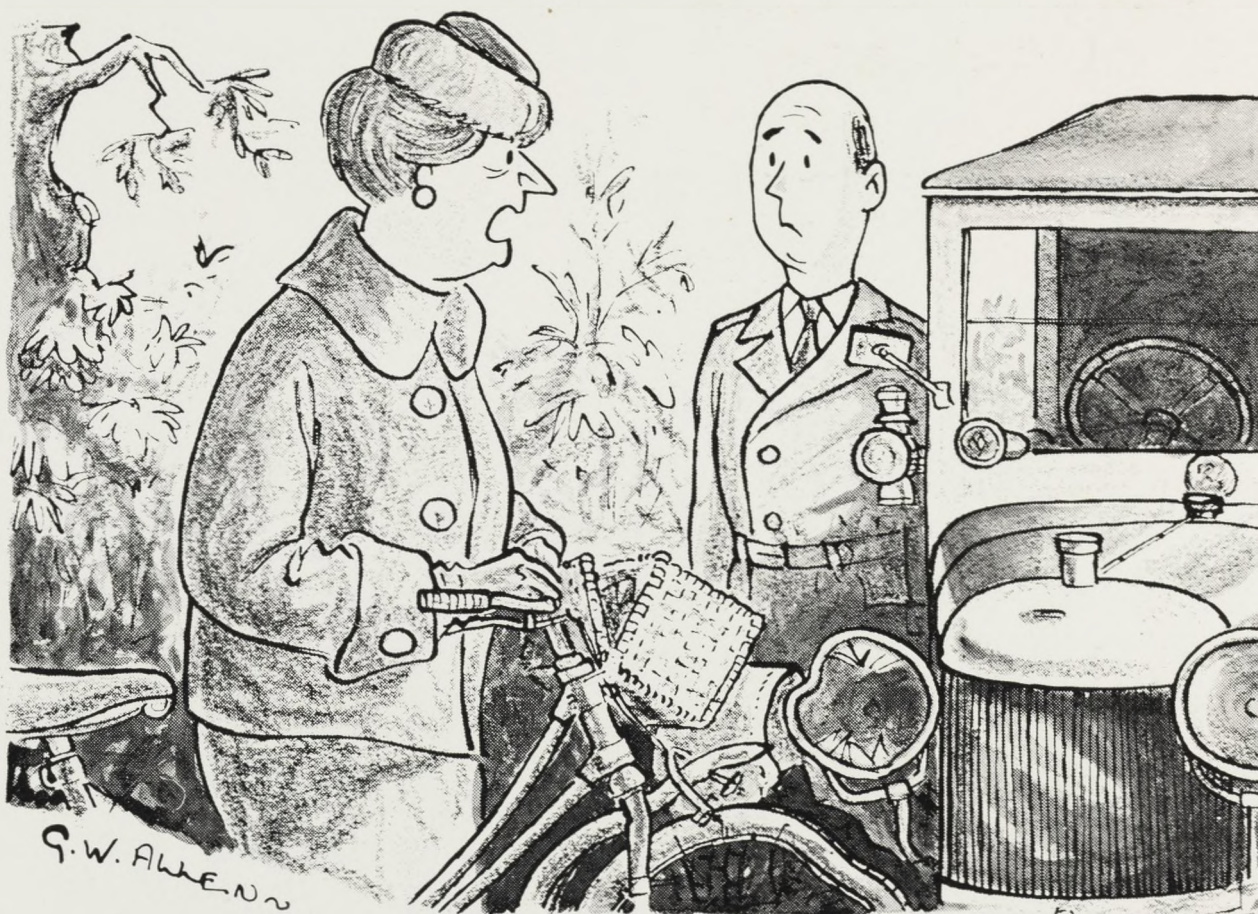
A major commemorative meeting in aid of charity is to be held at Brooklands on Sunday, 11th June, 1967, in conjunction with the annual Brooklands Reunion organised by W. Boddy, Esq. and D. H. Gahagan, Esq.

All owners of pre-1939 vehicles are invited to attend particularly those who own vehicles which, during the track's active life, took part in any event.

There will be a static display of vehicles from 1900 to 1939 arranged in chronological order together with a demonstration of high performance and racing cars of that era. There will also be a concours divided into as many classes as necessary and numerous other attractions including many Brookland personalities.

Further details and competitors entry forms available from:

Godalming Round Table,
Crownpits Lodge,
Godalming, Surrey.
Godalming 1106 or 3632



"You speed-crazy maniac!"

Dinner-Dance

MOVING IN FROM THE OPEN SPACES OF OSTERLEY TO Kensington had proved popular enough to justify the organisers' hopes with 110 members and guests. The Rembrandt Hotel is a mite plushier than our previous homes and the price was higher in consequence. In return we got an extra course, were spared the ritual turkey and the band was quieter than some I remember. Rising for the umpteenth "last" time as Chairman, James Crocker confounded the cynics by announcing his successor to be Mike Wilby. In future, James was to be a simple member who would raise awkward questions from the floor at the A.G.M. Mike Wilby confidently predicts that he is only a temporary occupant of the chair, but then they all start like that. Both speeches were over in five minutes; that's the way it should be at all dinners. Jeff Ody, in announcing the prize presentation, reminded J.C. of the committee's golden rule of co-opting onto itself anyone who asks awkward questions at the A.G.M. Sherry Woollard presented the prizes, or at least those

whose winners were present. The list of awards appears elsewhere in this issue if no wires have got crossed. From then on to 12.30 all was gaiety with people failing to recognise Maurice Leo with his shirt on, signing "Harold Wilson" on the programme that James sent round and generally dancing off the petit fours.

Another welcome innovation was the elimination of the normal decline and fall of the palais glide, hokey-kokey, knees-up, last waltz and auld lang syne. Instead the dancing continued to the end, when it stopped, and everyone went home. A splendid evening, and much enjoyed.

A.D.

Magazine copy. Contributions, including Secretarial Reports from Area Secretaries, for the AUTUMN issue should be with the Editor by no later than JULY 20th. Copy for Summer issue by APRIL 28th please.



Buckton's LG45 at the 1966 A.G.M.

Photo: A. Davey.

COMPETITION NOTES

Spring 1967

AT THE END OF THESE NOTES IS A LIST OF THOSE who achieved greatness during the year 1966.

For those whose name does not appear in the honours list, may it prove to be a challenge to have a go this year. There is, after all an event to suit most types of would-be competitor whether he be racer, sprinter or spit-and-polisher.

Each season a new crop of restrictions and conditions are announced in the interests of safety which usually serve to put the unwary competitor in bad odour with the scrutineers. We have, by now, been accustomed to wearing space helmets during a race; festooning the engine with cocoa tins at all possible points of oil seepage; and sticking large ON and OFF notices above the ignition switch on the dashboard. However, a word of warning to competitors at race meetings this season. Apart from general R.A.C. rules and regulations, individual clubs are making a few of their own. For instance, telescopic shock absorbers on vintage cars are no longer tolerated at V.S.C.C. race meetings and relations with the B.D.C. will be somewhat strained if you arrive at their race meetings on a trailer! The moral is—DO ENSURE

YOU KNOW THE RULES WHEN ENTERING A COMPETITION OF ANY KIND.

The standard of presentation of our cars at events is also very important as nothing devalues the status of a marque more positively than the sight of a scruffy-looking example parked apologetically between two models of another make in pristine condition. Fortunately, the Lagonda Club has always set a high standard in the past and from all appearances at the A.G.M. this is being well maintained.

Turning now to the coming season it would be very pleasant to see again names like Ron Gee, Jonathan Abson, Colin Bugler and other well-known members appearing in the entrant lists. Two-litre owners, in particular, were scarcely seen in 1966 and it is high time these cars showed themselves in strength. Indeed if one thinks back to the early 1950's when the B.D.C. first suggested Lagonda's should take part at their race meeting it was an automatic thought that the entry list would contain 7 or 8 2-litres, at least 3 3-litres and a sprinkling of 16/80's. At this first ever Lagonda race members responded so enthusiastically that 35 entries were produced which necessitated two races. These were the days

before credit laps and as the flag fell Nancy Audsley's 11.9 would trundle off into the middle distance with two and a half laps to do before the next man left. What a lonely race but what fun! It was fun for all, and still is, and fifteen years on a 2-litre or a 3, or a 16/80 and yes, even an 11.9 can still give you an exciting race and as you are amongst friends there is no cut and thrust and no one minds if you drive fast or slowly. Come and try it and if you ask the people that have done it they will tell you that the handicappers are always kind to new comers and you may even win!

Forthcoming Events. Saturday, April 8th. B.D.C. LAGONDA SPRINT. Ford Aerodrome, near Arundel, Sussex. This is the jumping-off date for all enthusiasts south of Edinburgh! An opportunity to blow up the car before Curborough. A fairly informal meeting to get everyone in the right frame of mind to tackle the more challenging test of the Curborough Circuit. A good attendance of Southern members is expected!

Sunday, May 21st. B.D.C. LAGONDA SPRINT at Curborough, near Lichfield. This will take exactly the same form as in 1966 and we hope to get as much support from our Club as then.

Saturday, July 1st. NORTHERN DRIVING TESTS at Sandtoft Airfield, near Bawtry, Yorkshire. Southern members, please make every attempt to support the North at this event. After all, Northern members regularly compete in Lagonda events in the South. A good Southern showing will please both Herb Schofield and the Competition Secretary.

Sunday, July 23rd. LAGONDA CLUB. B.D.C. INTER-CLUB DRIVING TESTS at Finmere in Buckinghamshire. This new event incorporates the Southern Driving Tests with an inter-club team event with the Bentley Drivers' Club. We shall be looking for some good strong teams to challenge these experienced drivers. Rapiers may apply! More about this event in the next magazine or newsletter.

The date for the Firlie Hill Climb is definitely confirmed, much to everyone's delight as Sunday, September 17th. It was much missed last year.

[Note the dates given above for the Sprint at Ford and the Driving Tests at Finmere are correct, having been altered from those dates which appeared in the Winter magazine.] J.C.W.

AWARD LIST 1966

Southern Rally

Winner	M. LEO
Class awards	A. BROWN R. W. KERRIDGE J. R. TURNER
Award of Merit	J. A. WOOD

Northern Rally

Winner	D. R. HINE
Class award	J. BROADBANK
Award of Merit	A. BROWN

Curborough Sprint

Class H.	1st	R. W. KERRIDGE
	2nd	M. E. SHERWOOD
Class J.	1st	D. R. HINE
	2nd	P. M. WEIR
	3rd	H. L. SCHOFIELD

Lagonda Race B.D.C. Silverstone

1st	J. S. ELLIOTT
2nd	I. G. MACDONALD
3rd	D. R. HINE

Border Rally

Winner	J. G. RIDER
Best Novice	J. C. BOYLAN

Northern Autumn Social

Winner	K. S. PAPE
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Concours d'Elegance

Winner	G. A. SEATON
Class awards	B. J. H. MARTIN E. E. HARRIS

Curborough Driving Tests

Lagonda Team	3rd	M. LEO R. W. KERRIDGE D. R. HINE H. L. SCHOFIELD
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Michael Trophy

D. R. HINE

Fox Trophy

M. LEO

Northern Trophy

H. L. SCHOFIELD

Densham Trophy

A. BROWN

Allison Trophy

P. M. WEIR

Car Club Trophy

D. P. CROW

For services rendered to the Club

LUCY DENSHAM
P. A. DENSHAM
C. S. GREEN

1966 with 14,058

1966 ARRIVED, AS HAD MANY OF THE 14 YEARS I have owned her, with the car immobilized. Always frustrating, always aggravating, never predictable but never dull.

This time, the engine was out of the chassis, having the bearings attended to in a machine shop. Some years before, I had abandoned hope of rebuilding the Dural rods and had (foolishly) arranged to have them machined and babbit poured in for bearings. The babbit had served for six years, but gradually, the oil pressure dropped more and more and the clatter increased. Finally, one of the rods lost the bearing metal and "that was that".

Bob Crane, our American Representative, reviews his motoring activities in 1966.

This called for immediate action and I determined on a "once and for all" repair. Although I had considered Maurice Leo's suggestion of using XK-120 Jaguar rods, I discarded this solution. In addition to requiring complete new engine balancing, it would have necessitated the fitting of new pistons to accommodate the longer rod centres.

In the end, my machinist found that thin wall, steel backed, bearing inserts for a Chevrolet, heavy duty, V-8 engine would fit with a minimum of alterations. This was done, and as I inspected the finished work, just before it was buttoned up, it did look perfect.

After the lower end was complete, I brought it home, ready to lift into the chassis by means of the hoist on a breakdown tow truck. Everything looked fine—except—the oil gauge float had been left out during assembly. However, since I had previously fitted a dip stick to confirm the float reading, I elected to rely only on the stick and save opening everything up again.

In the mean time, I had hopefully installed an engine mount taken from 16026, my parts car, because it appeared in better condition. This proved a mistake as the hanger bolt just wouldn't fit. So—out came the new (?) mount and with much jacking and hammering, the old mount was



Picnic lunch at the football game.

installed again and the bolt successfully inserted.

I should have reported that I had set August 1st as a target date to allow a week before our planned trip to Canada to sort things out a bit and put some mileage on the new bearings.

Time flew, minor problem followed minor problem and I worked later and later into the night on every spare occasion. At one point I began to feel that my long suffering wife, Helen, was losing patience. She was overheard telling all and sundry that if this brute ever had to come apart again, she would personally sell it to the first taker for 50 cents. (And she meant it !!!)

Needless to say, perseverance overcame all and with one last desperate effort, we were ready to roll exactly one week before the start of our trip.

Hoping to be farsighted, I had fitted a new carbon seal in the water pump and had laced the radiator water heavily with water pump lubricant and rust inhibitor. This bit of foresight backfired and turned out to be the only fly in the ointment. While everything else functioned perfectly, the water pump kept up a steady dripping.

If you have ever tried to work on a V-12 water pump without first removing the radiator, you will understand the valiant attempt made to

correct the trouble before leaving. Not succeeding, I did the sly thing of forgetting it and carrying two jugs of water with us to "top up" when needed.

Troublewise, our 1500 mile trip was an anti-climax. We held to a maximum 50 miles per hour for the first 500 miles speeding up from then on as conditions warranted. The car ran beautifully with no problems of any kind beyond filling the radiator every morning before starting the day's trip. (For some reason, leak or not, one filling would last all day, as long as we kept moving. Once stopped, with the engine shut off, she leaked profusely. Can any one suggest a reason?)

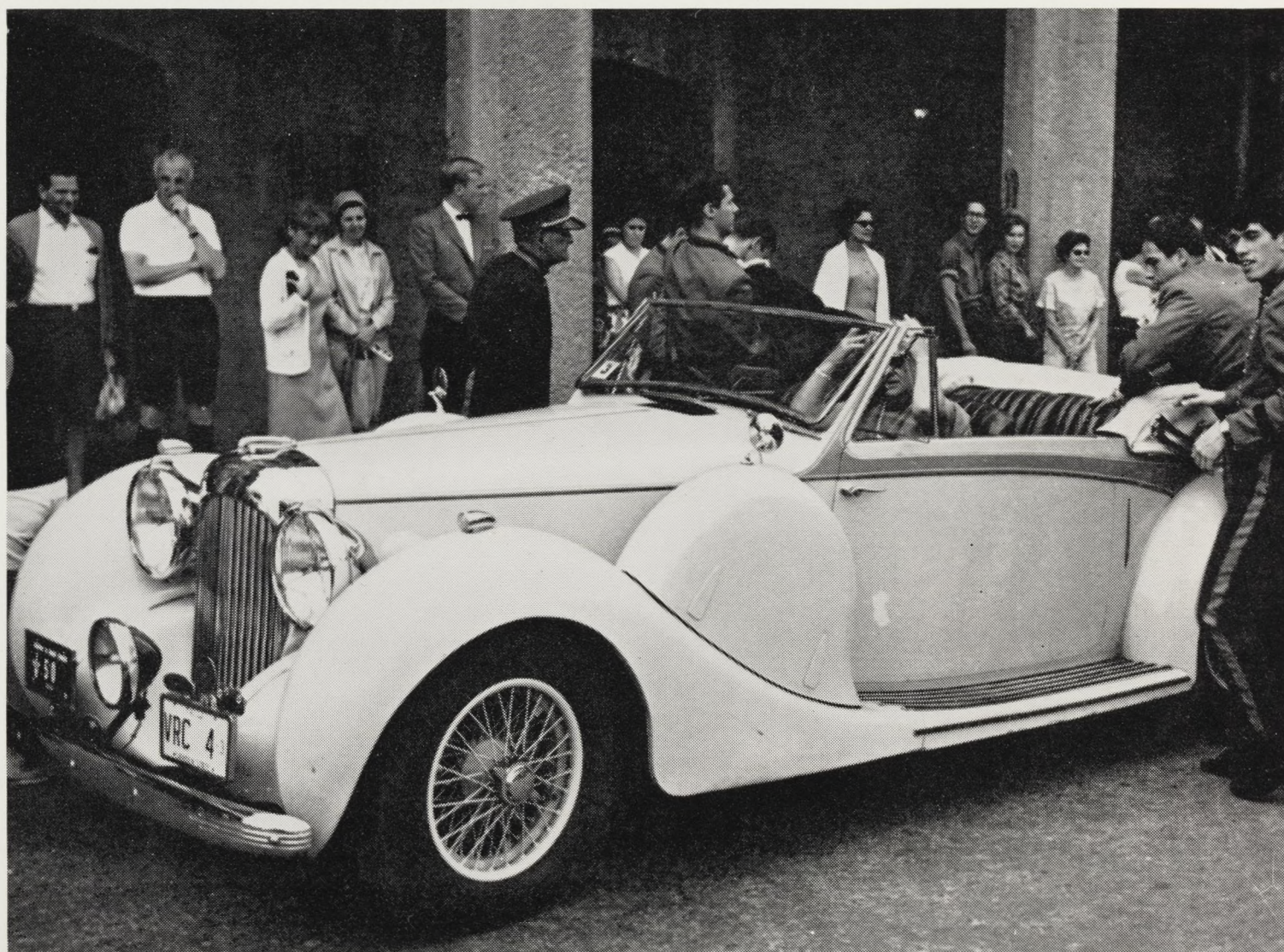
To digress, our tour, with the Classic Car Club of America is the Annual Caravan. Each year a week's itinerary is planned in different parts of the country with all arrangements made in advance. As a rule, we go through resort country, stopping early each day to enjoy sight-seeing, swimming or sports. Cars assemble at the starting point on their own time and this year, we met in Montreal,

Canada. Here, the 500-room Holiday Motel, in the centre of the city not only housed us, but had two underground floors of the huge parking basement set aside exclusively for our group. We ended up with 246 men, women and children travelling in 99 Classic cars. I will grudgingly admit that there were a few other good cars, including 4 Bentley's, 11 Rolls, 1 Horch, 3 Duesenbergs, 1 Stutz, 1 16 cylinder Marmon plus the usual number of Cadillacs, Lincolns and 45 Packards. Brazenly, I must report that the Lagonda was the centre of attention.

We were on the go during parts of four days and at all times we were under police escort. Stops were made for sight-seeing, lunch and gasoline. The convoy, which stretched over several miles of road when under way, was controlled by two-way radio and a breakdown truck followed along, but was never called upon.

The Caravan commenced with a get-together cocktail party on Saturday evening with the usual instructions to the drivers. We left Montreal Sunday morning, thankful for the lack of business

Bob Crane's V-12 admired in Quebec.





Five Lagondas at Palmer Stadium, Princeton.

traffic and followed the South shore of the St. Laurence River, along the plains to Quebec City. We arrived in the middle of the afternoon, in time for sight-seeing and a wonderful French dinner. The next day we headed East again along the River to Pointe-au-Pic, travelling over some delightful up and down country with unforgettable scenery. Our destination was the luxury hotel, Manoir Richelieu on Murray Bay. There was much to do here and we enjoyed an extra day of leisure before resuming our tour.

Our third day took us 150 miles North along the Saguenay River and through the Laurentides Provincial Park. Much of the trip was through back country with lightly travelled roads ending at Chicoutimi, the Indian village at the headwaters of the Saguenay River. Here, it was necessary to divide the group because there were no hotels large enough to take us all at one time. We stayed at the Manoir-de-Saguenay in Arvida. This is a town built by the Aluminum Company of America near their processing plant which produces tremendous quantities of aluminium ingots and sheet metal. While there we visited the

plant as well as the Shipshaw hydro-electric plant, which produces electricity for the processing.

The last day of our tour in caravan was back through another part of the Laurentides to Quebec City. Here we held our closing banquet with most disbanding Sunday morning for their trips to home.

This tour, called 1966 Caravane Au Canada Francais, was entirely within the Province of Quebec, which is called French Canada. Much more French is spoken than English. In fact, at Arvida, few natives spoke English at all. The tour, planned by the Caravan Committee of the Club was very ably assisted by our Canadian members. Louis Gravel, a Montreal member planned much of the itinerary. At Murray Bay, he and his charming wife, Madelain, entertained all the adult members of the group for cocktails at their Summer home near by.

Helen and I stayed over in Quebec City for an extra day of sight-seeing along the river, and returned home leisurely by way of New England.

For those interested, even with the rather tight engine bearings we averaged over 14 miles per

American gallon on the trip. Very little oil was burned.

Aside from the water pump leak, the only other observation I might make is that I found when driving up long steep hills at full throttle, the SU fuel pumps (although recently rebuilt), were not up to the task. A Stewart-Warner pump near the fuel tank has corrected that weakness.

The next month saw little motoring as it seemed that I was involved in earning a living. (Why does filthy lucre always raise its ugly head?) At off hours I completed plans for our Annual Football Meet to be held on October 15th. This outing attracts some 100 people and about 35 cars. It is a regular C.C.C.A. activity and for a number of years I have been chairman of this affair. It is a full day starting with our assembly at a large State Police Barracks Parking lot. We arrive separately leaving about 11 a.m. in a convoy for the football stadium, a mile or so away. We arrange for a private parking field, set aside for our cars, with police guards during the game. The cars are parked in a quadrangle facing in and forming a centre square of grass for picnicing and attracting attention. I might say that I use this occasion each year as an excuse to entice some of our closer Lagonda members to join us for the day. In a country such as ours where you may go for years without seeing a Lagonda outside an occasional meet, it is a real thrill to me to gather from five to 10 Lagondas into one spot at one time. These cars come from considerable distances, in many cases, some up to 400 miles. I must blushing-ly say that they are always the centre of attention.

After the picnic we attend the game, sitting together in the stadium. Afterwards, most of us start for home, stopping at a wayside restaurant for dinner together before disbanding.

Fortunately for us, James and Barbara Crocker were to visit us at our home the next day. This excellent timing, on their part, made it possible for us to have five Lagondas to greet them. We thoroughly enjoyed their visit with us and their warm friendliness.

Now, with deep snow covering the ground, 14,058 is again reposing in a nearby barn, ready for me to remove her radiator and attend to the faulty water pump. This operation should prove an easy challenge for the first warm Spring day and we look forward to lots of good driving in the year ahead.

R.C.



Happy group of American Lagonda owners.

MEMBERS' REGISTER

The Committee intend to publish a new "Blue Book" register. To enable a complete and up-to-date list of members' cars to be collated a special card will be sent out to all members for them to complete and return.

Failure to return the completed card will result in the member being classified as a non-owner. "You have been warned!" says organiser Jeff Ody.

A DREAM COMES TRUE AS A BOAT TAKES SHAPE

THE DREAM OF A MAN WHOSE FAMILY WERE Margatonians is coming true in a building near the harbour. Every day, in fact, it is taking fresh shape.

In the upstairs part of Henniker and Spain's workshop at Fort Hill, Margate, a 24 ft. vee-bottom cruiser is being made for Mr. Charles Long, of Sutton, Surrey.

Building the boat single-handed is Margate lifeboatman Mr. George Hatcher. He started in mid-August and hopes to take the boat for trials in March.

Mr. Long told me: "In the past most of my spare time was spent in motor-racing. But 10 years ago I began to think about having my own boat. As my family came from Margate, this seemed the right place to build it."

He obtained a whole trunk of West African mahogany which, with oak and teak, will make the boat's superstructure.

Of hard-chine carvel design, the beam is 7 ft. 6 in. and the boat will be powered by a Perkins Z-drive diesel engine.

Mr. Hatcher, who for 20 years was skipper of the pleasure boat *Golden Spray*, has built many boats before, but for this one he is adapting a plan from a book to Mr. Long's specification.

Mr. Long, who is a member of Margate Yacht Club, hopes to sail the completed cruiser in Continental canals, as well as off the Thanet coast. *Reprinted from the Isle of Thanet Gazette*

Lagonda Club stalwart, Charles Long watches as his boat takes shape.



TRIALS and Tribulations

AN EARLY ATTEMPT AT VINTAGE COMPETITION WAS in the Nidderdale trial soon after the war, in the S/C 2-litre. One had read how well Lagondas had always done in the major trials of the late Vintage period, so it was with some confidence that we undertook this venture.

We will not beat about the bush—this confidence was vastly misplaced. Despite what it had said in *Motor* and *Autocar*, my Lagonda just did not like the hills at all. One long hill, not even observed, caused considerable embarrassment. The whole entry left Pately Bridge in convoy, and so far up the hill on to the Moors we were enjoying it no end—bottom gear, about 3,000 revs, appropriate noises, not excessive. Then it got steeper, the convoy slowed, and everyone changed into bottom gear except me, who was already there, and maybe the 4½ Invicta which would not be to a gear or two anyway. The only thing to do was to let the rest go by, return to the bottom of the hill and rush it—and there is no doubt that with a more or less level start and a clear run our progress was impressive in the extreme. A re-start on Lofthouse bank nearly put paid to the clutch.

Apropos ratios, W. M. Couper once wrote to the Press claiming that he used the same axle ratio on his 2-litre for trials and track work, and that the car was virtually standard. The track work—at Brooklands—consisted of record attempts and helping J. J. Hall to take long distance motorcycle and sidecar records. The assistance took the form of driving behind Hall and providing illumination with his headlights. The records particularly noted were the 200 mile and 200 Km which Couper took at slightly over 80 m.p.h.—not exciting by the standards of small racing cars, but quite healthy for a full four seater of 1928. What Couper did not mention were indirect ratios. Also, not mentioned in press reports of the trials of the day is where one started the observed sections, and if one had to tackle them from a standing start—it makes a difference if the car is fitted with a dashing close ratio gearbox. There is little doubt that all the hills the V.S.C.C. asked us to climb could have been romped up with a running start. We were usually set off from a little way up the hill, and

the high bottom gear did the rest—or didn't! It was most exasperating to find the rather decent supercharged machine unable to cope with hills that Morris Cowleys chugged up with no great difficulty—yet the press of the Vintage days never failed to provide glowing reports of individual Lagondas, or Lagondas as a group, making dashing impressive climbs.

The following year some of these lessons were borne in mind. The 2-litre van was robbed of its wide ratio gearbox. Some very flexible, but quite smooth 7·00—17 tyres and wheels to suit were fitted behind, with the blocks removed from between axle and spring to gain some clearance. A try-out on a local hill indicated that we were on the right lines. We made the mistake though of patronising a Ball the evening before, and arrived at Pately Bridge for the start of the trial after limited sleep, and with our powers of responsible reflection considerably diminished.

The first test was, as before, a re-start on Middle Tongue. One of the regular hills in the London-Edinburgh of the Vintage years, it was now tarmac, so it seemed a pity to let down the tyre pressures until we had done test 2, the slow-fast. Unfortunately a patch of wet leaves coincided with where they directed me to put my rear wheels, so we did not re-start. The slow-fast went wrong, which was very irritating because I had attained a certain proficiency in this in practice. Even letting tyres down to 7 lb. per sq. in. and hearty bouncing failed to conquer Hole Bottom. Peacock's Walk proved too tight to get on to without reversing, and they failed us on that, but let us have a free go, which went well and did a bit for the morale. But still a total duck at the lunch stop. Afterwards a fairly easy Bouthwaite Bank and the ferocious Scar House, which we managed to scale, with only five other competitors, made up somewhat for previous disappointments.

Third time lucky—and substituting for the ball an evening in front of the new-fangled television at a pub in Wharfedale—and passengered by a local volunteer—a shock-headed young man who from his first glance at the car insisted that we would win—we did in fact achieve the premier award; though honesty compels me to admit that there was something in the way the timed tests were marked that rather favoured us. (Copy to Mr. Bond)!

There were spring trials as well, and though very similar, they did not seem quite so difficult.

We carried the official reporter on one (he said in the V.S.C.C. Journal that we had gone up West End at 5,000 r.p.m. in bottom) and attained that anomalous Vintage award the "Most Meritorious". It is usually awarded to someone who has had a dam good try at something in a rather unsuitable vehicle. This time the degree of mud seemed to suit the lighter cars, and so a Riley 9 and a couple of Morris Cowleys got clear rounds on all the observed bits. Also with clear rounds were that nicest of men Murray Austin (in his cut-and-shut Lancia) and us. It seemed a little unfortunate, but there was a trifle of bias against Murray—the organiser thought he had won too often—so of the three timed tests on the two where speed counted one could lose marks by being too long, but on the slow-fast one could not only lose by being too quick, but could *gain* marks by being better, i.e., slower than average. Therefore the three cars with 20 to 1 odd bottom gear took such ages over the slow bit, that all Murray could do in the fast ones, with no bonus, just could not catch them up. My times, with a bit lower bottom gear than Murray were quite near his, so they gave me the invidious award because I had "done nearly as well as Murray Austin with a perfectly standard car"! Murray was very nice about it.

A 2—3-litre hybrid was fun, and gave bags of power at all sorts of moderate revs, but there was too much weight in front and the front wheels dug themselves in. This did very well on a fairly dry trial section of the Welsh Rally. Purchase of a 4½ Rapide seemed to put paid to trials—it was a pity to scrape the sides—that was the excuse for staying at home. Then came the brainstorm—build a conveyance that one did not mind scraping the sides of and fit a 4½ engine and the V.S.C.C. could start looking for some more difficult hills.

Again things did not quite work out as one had hoped. First there was not quite enough adhesion—my fat Fougasse-looking 17 in. wheels would not go on. Despite the power the high gears did not allow of just that delicacy of control necessary in soft mud. Also the V.S.C.C. had already found some more difficult hills—not so steep perhaps, but definitely muddier and unkind. So the first time out we figured rather low in the touring class results—yes touring! At all other Vintage events they call it a special and give us 10% to make up. Certainly it was not proving an ideal trials car—it was too low

behind for a start. The exhaust pipe generally got knocked off, or even worse partly knocked off, quite early in the proceedings—the present owner brought most of the exhaust system home for me one day. The petrol tank attained a most dissolute look underneath. The exhaust once came away in the middle and acted as a sort of forward facing sprag, and stopped us lower on a hill than anyone else.

We did a bit better after a time or too, but not without derangements. This time we had scaled the first hill without assistance, to the plaudits of the marshals and the relief of the pushers, when someone trotted up with 6 ft. of 2 in. pipe and said he thought it was ours. It was indeed, as was also the hole in the petrol tank that some other kind soul pointed out. A handful of clay somewhat checked the flow and we made a hasty dash to the next hill. It was here that we stormed the cobbles and as the reporter said, "hurling quite sizeable rocks down the hill", and with a great struggle, managed to get to section 9, only to find that a very nice 3½ Bentley, all clean and respectable, and with standard tyres had got to the top. We conscripted all the chewing gum we could muster from the other competitors, bought quantities more in Burnsall—and a stiff dose of petrol—and pressed on to Kilnsea. If chewing is not all that pleasant to a non-addict, administering the result that day was even less so. It rained the whole day and it never seemed possible to stop the car except over some 2 inches of very wet water. Litton Brow submitted to our charge, but the road beyond was quite perilous—a grass track, saturated, with negligible adhesion—and if one had got off, it is doubtful whether the car would have been recoverable. It was indeed a beastly day. The hood kept the downpour out, but the floor boards just were not adequate to stem the wash from below. The country was getting wilder, and we had decided that if we needed the reserve tank we would have to make a dash for civilisation. However when we had to switch over we were almost at the last hill, and with an eye to ones friends and the thought that someone would take pity and not let us perish of starvation and exposure, we made our attempt, then set off for Burnsall, at Kilnsea we ran quite out of juice, but the present owner of the car was in convoy and fetched us two gallons. This got us to Burnsall where we fortunately had made arrangements for staying the night. A patent patch was applied and four gallons bought in the

morning, which just got us to the Townsley establishment. Round trip about 200 miles, petrol used about 25 gallons, reward one pewter pot, capacity $\frac{1}{2}$ pint.

Thinking back, the passengers were usually amiable, occasionally quite charming, but always different!

If in some other events we were not continually dogged by misfortune, it was rare that SOMETHING did not happen.

Have any of you been in reverse for keeps? A Ford once went backwards all the way from New York to San Francisco, I forget what it was intended to prove. We were trying to prove that we were better at driving tests at a Vintage meeting at Heston, and had done a couple in what someone described as indecent time (until then I had always connected "Indecent" with females exposing interesting parts of their person) when the third test was offered. There seemed a choice of routes, and to avoid a lot of backing and filling, I elected to do quite a long reverse—there was bags of room. Unfortunately, having attained the desired situation, I was quite unable to disengage reverse gear. The only thing to do was to ask people to move some oil drums and let me continue backwards to the touchline. The subsequent towing to a hangar, and thence to an establishment at Beaconsfield are another story. I was not perhaps the most proud to be at that end of a tow rope, but was and still am very grateful for the help.

Mention of towing reminds one of the time we collected a saloon car from near Leeds. It should have been a decent gentlemanly affair—a roof, a proper tow bar, all complete. What had not been considered was that there was no engine in the saloon, just a large hole, and through that hole arrived and then on the steerer, considerable quantities of water from the wet roads and gas from the $4\frac{1}{2}$ exhaust pipe—I doubt whether he has got over his headache yet. An even braver effort was by the character who sat on a bare chassis, with no goggles, all the way from Carlisle to Hull. It was summer, but with the $4\frac{1}{2}$ one could forget sometimes that anything was hung on behind. We towed a fabric saloon some distance once, and there was a nice hill which the driver enjoyed a lot; but the owner of the saloon was wondering when the sparks from the exhaust were going to ignite the fabric.

On another Vintage test meeting they put on eight tests instead of the usual four. We did four,

CHANGE OF CHAIRMAN

THE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCE WITH GREAT regret that JAMES CROCKER has been forced to vacate the office of Chairman of the Lagonda Club owing to continued pressure of business. The likelihood of this happening was made clear at the last A.G.M. and James is now of the opinion that the stage has been reached when he can no longer carry out these duties to his satisfaction. The Club will miss his guiding hand and all members will wish to join the Committee in thanking James for his sterling service over the years which embraced many extra duties for the Club beyond the role of Chairman. Happily James will remain in the Club and continue to compete with his Rapier and we trust his advice will still be available.

Since the amalgamation of the old Car Club and 2-litre Register there have been only two Chairmen, both members of the legal profession. In a temporary capacity they are followed by a Chartered Surveyor as MIKE WILBY has agreed to stand-in until such time as a more suitable candidate comes forward. Mike was of course Club Secretary from 1953 until 1960 and has been active in Club activities generally since that time and so needs little introduction. We wish him well.

then the oil drums were moved, meantime the competitors patronised the tea car. This competitor spent the tea break mending his brakes (front). At the finish of test 4, fortunately without mucking it up all that much, the brakes bust, and a piece of rodding cantered away over the tarmac and was never recovered. The technically minded may be interested in the details of how a plug spanner was converted into a brake rod—I will not enlarge here.

Suffice to say that though the repair was not trusted with full emergency stops, we did beat a $4\frac{1}{2}$ Invicta in the acceleration and braking test. It was at the end of this meeting that another tow took place. C. C. Clutton presented four young men who had it seemed been rather optimistic about cruising speeds appropriate to a 2-litre on M1. I was able to explain the methods Lagonda owners adopt when in need of pieces, but then came the question—was it a good idea to leave a

nice looking Lagonda lying about Silverstone over a winter weekend? We decided to tow to a helpful looking garage. In the end we wished ourselves on the Hartops, left the car there and deposited the young men at Bletchley station. It seemed the best plan, it was on the main line; but someone afterwards did just wonder if any trains stopped there.

The November Rally was once in North Wales. We were greeted by early marshals saying we were the only ones on time, then there was a tinkle. Now it always seems wise, or had done up till then, to investigate tinkles in Lagondas. We pulled in to the side of a lane, we opened the bonnet, we peered here and there with a torch, we pushed the Lagonda, we pulled it—then three cars went by, including the Chairman. I'm afraid this rather disturbed the driver, despite the navigator's insistence that these cars ought to have been in front anyway and there was lots of time. Well some rocks got in the way—they were on the side of the road, part of a mountain or something—but there was a large puddle and it pulled the car into the rocks—the driver sticks to this story. The front mudguard was nearly off, so we put it in the back of the car. Then we found the back mudguard was fouling, so we had to take the wheel off to bash things a bit straight. By now we were a bit late. The navigator was doing fine—plotting way ahead, and no question of going astray, as long as the driver kept on the road. He said OK for four miles—no hazard at all, and got down to his book work. In two miles there was a crossroad. A Bentley was reversing out of one way, and Alvis peering tentatively down another, so the navigator was jogged and he said this way you ass it's obviously the main road. We motored up to the farm, and hope we did not wake up the farmer as we turned round. After all this they said we had won, and we went home very smug, only to receive the results which showed there had been a mistake and we had not won. One wonders since whether it is not better to ignore tinkles, but just motor on until the thing stops completely and have a good mend up. Oh!—the mudguard in the back—While waiting for the next morning's proceedings to start, a well disposed official whispered that we were not entirely legal and the Stewards might take it amiss; so we borrowed some string and attached the mudguard, which finished the rally, then to London and back to Hull—good string!

D. H. COATES

THE GLOVE IS THROWN

IN THE DAYS OF THE TRICAR AND THE 11.1 H.P. such insults would have had but one response, and Flashbulb would have found himself at dawn with his seconds, awaiting the avenging sword thrust. But he has a point.

The new member with his D.B. Lagonda soon realises he is just an 'also ran' and wonders if he has joined the right Club. He checks his car fore and aft; yes, the Lagonda badge is there, but his precious love handled with such pride as he swept past the processions of indifferent weekend machinery, now stands alone, well away from the 'real' Lagondas. "We didn't expect you" says Harry, towering over the open cockpit like his continental 2-litre towers over a Sprite. "There isn't a class for you." Rather grudgingly one is allowed to enter the Concours with the 4½'s and the non-standard 'freaks'. That at one A.G.M. at least, he won his class can in no way be connected with Flashbulb!

Having been a car enthusiast all my life, and I have driven for 42 years, I am amazed to read Flashbulb's views on the 3-litre bodywork: "Ugly and claustrophobic" he says, "little appeal to the enthusiast." He ought to see and hear the enthusiasm which surrounds PLH424 almost everywhere she is parked, at home or abroad (with the exception of course of Lagonda Club meetings?!). She has not it is true the magnificent metallic chunk of built-in wind resistance which is the most imposing feature of the pre-war classic car, but otherwise her lines flow smoothly and without clutter from nose to tail as a thoroughbred should and in the eyes of countless beholders she is outstandingly beautiful.

Now this 'obviously *closed car* convertible' is, on this January day, open, as it is for most of the year, even in England and certainly abroad. All day the sun has shone, and as it is only necessary to push a button for the hood to fold back or forward one does not require a team of mechanics but only suitable clothing, to enjoy the sun, the scenery and the 'is it necessary' from one's wife and family. Any enthusiast will tell you that the exhilaration of an open cockpit even at sub zero temperatures is worth a little wifely petulance.

For the past two holidays PLH424 has toured from Hertfordshire through Belgium and Luxembourg to Switzerland, over many Passes and down



PLH 24 at the Bahnhof Buffet, St. Moritz.

the Autostrada del Sole to Florence and over to Elba, open all the way of course. I wish Flashbulb had been behind us to watch that rear suspension on the Passes—if he could have kept up! The only failures were a window cable and a thermostat, and as I had fitted a radiator blind this latter was little trouble. The day after returning from this 3,000 mile trip PLH424 was at the A.G.M. as usual.

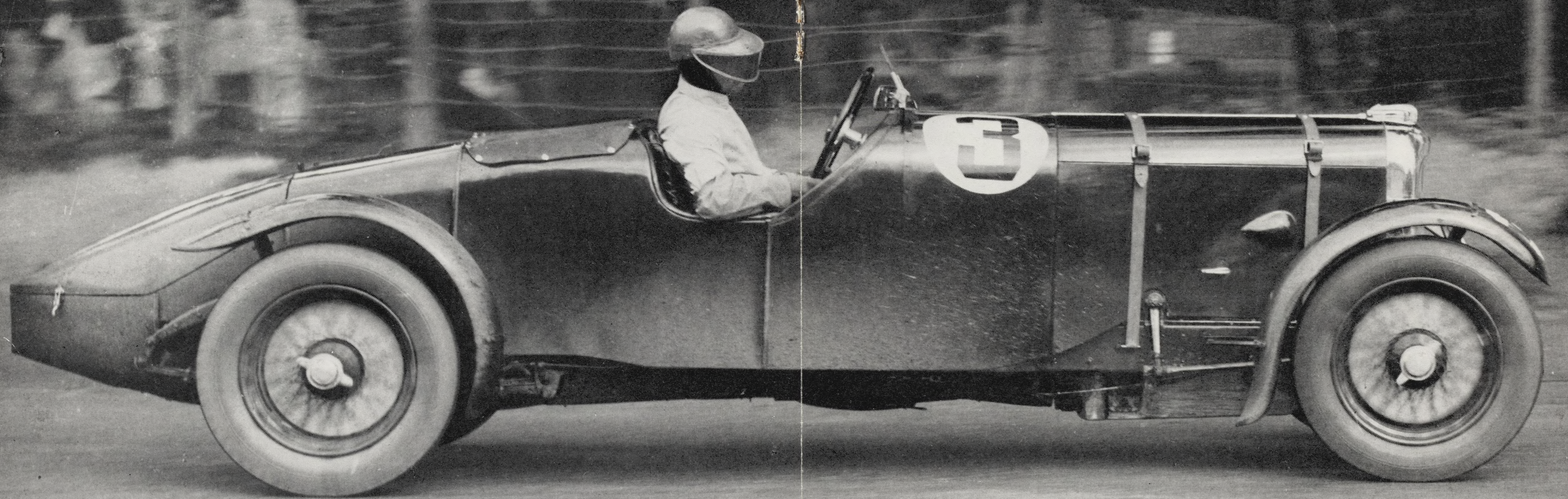
On reading the January *News Letter* one member tore up the article he had written about his beloved mistress, a 3-litre D.B. Saloon and threatened to resign! So I take up the glove, my weapon a pen, but if this is unacceptable, then let Flashbulb come and experience the smooth surge of power when the throttle is opened at 70 m.p.h. The steady ride and positive steering, the almost human response of this lovely thoroughbred which makes a drive of 552 miles in the day a pleasure (and the first three hours of that were in fog!). If Flashbulb would like to go all claustrophobic he could ride in the boot; there is plenty of room for him and his baggage. The 'unfortunate bodywork' will, on the drophead, accommodate six normal size adults in comfort, or if use is made of the full

length arm rests of which the front cockpit has four, then, there could not be four more comfortable passengers anywhere, and owing to the rear independent suspension already mentioned there is no 'tunnel' to curtail the rear leg-room.

PLH424 is now over 12 years old, has covered 120,000 miles, averages a comfy 50 m.p.h. on most journeys in U.K. at 18.5 m.p.g. Now shod with Pirelli Cinturato 185-16 tyres which, though their grip does not quite equal the R.S.5's, are excellent and steering, though not as featherlight as the Aston DB.4, 5 or 6, is considered light enough by my strictly feminine wife. Speedo readings too are accurate with this tyre. I have had 110 on the clock but for autostrada cruising, 75-80 seems ideal. In really hot weather with radiator temperatures around 90°C, the oil pressure only drops from a norm of 80 lb./sq. in. to 75 at 4,000-4,500 r.p.m. The oil is best changed at 1,500 miles and the filter element at 5,000.

For good cornering the setting of the rear torsion bars is critical, but Mr. Towcock, formerly test driver at Feltham, assured me that with loaded boot and the original tyres he was able to four wheel drift the D.B. 3-litre.

Continued on page 18



The really sad thing about owning a D.B. 3-litre Lagonda is that when Aston Martin Lagonda were at Feltham, all spares were prolific and the spares service superb. Now they have moved to Newport Pagnell the lack of spares is lamentable, especially for body and chassis. There is, however, one bright star in this gloomy prospect and that is that ever present help in trouble, Capt. Ivan Forshaw and his family who have had the foresight to lay down as many spares as they could obtain so that not only Lagonda Club members but even Mr. David Brown's own works now rely on him for spares for their own cars. What a position! It must be unique in the history of car clubs and manufacturers. They both owe Capt. Forshaw a great debt of gratitude.

J.H.L.

[The Editor has received several letters likewise defending the DB 2.6 and 3-litre models. Due to shortage of space some of these are held over to the next issue.]

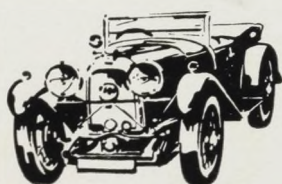
FOR SALE

1934 M.45 Tourer, BLP 494, available for sale to a U.K. Club member. In excellent condition throughout. The engine has done only 20,000 miles from new and the bodywork has been extensively renovated and repainted by Thompson-Doxey of Southport. (See Magazine No. 50, Winter 1964.) Also:

1934 M.45 Saloon, AMV 751. This is a splendid vehicle in which I have travelled many thousands of miles in the last two years. During this period I have overhauled the engine, rewired, rechromed and resprayed the car. It is now in first class condition. Also:

1940 LG.6 Saloon, JPG 824. This car is in good running order and looks at its best in dim moonlight. Available at a modest price.

DAVID HINE, WHITE BARN HOUSE, WHITE BARN ROAD, ALDERLEY EDGE, CHESHIRE. (Tel: Alderley Edge 3209.)



HISTORIC CARS — HISTORIC DAYS

FOR THE 1936 SEASON ARTHUR FOX PREPARED four LG45R's, the two 2-seaters that are so well known and that are still in the Club, and two 4-seaters.

The 4-seaters were built specially for the T.T., possibly because at the time they were prepared the regulations demanded four seats for cars over 1500 c.c. This rule later being amended, but nevertheless the two cars ran in that ill fated race of 1936 on the Ards circuit, No. 2 driven by Pat Fairfield, and No. 3 by Earl Howe.

As can be seen from the photographs the general appearance was much as the 2-seaters but the space immediately behind the driver being the extra seats rather than the 40 gallon tank. The tank was then moved down to the section that can clearly be seen on the excellent shot of No. 3, with Earl Howe looking so relaxed as he swings down Ballystockart. See centre spread. The spare wheel was housed in the end of the tail under the hinged cover.

These two cars ran faultlessly throughout the race with Fairfield finishing 4th at 78.49 m.p.h. and Howe 5th at 78.40, and then they vanished from the scene for ever. Did they ever reappear again in some other guise, or were they broken up and lost for ever? The latter seems unlikely as they were brand new cars and were registered EPB101 and EPB102, and assuming the chassis numbers were close to the 2-seaters they would be around 12110.

This race saw not only the end of these cars but also the end of this fine natural road circuit. During the course of the race a young local driver lost control of his Riley coming down to Newtownards, went through a lamp post and on to the pavement killing several people. Whilst by present day standards it looks as if the spectators were fairly casual where they stood, it was a terrible tragedy and racing thereafter in future years was not allowed.

What a circuit it must have been! $13\frac{3}{4}$ miles long it had to be covered 30 times making it a long and gruelling race. It ran through country and through towns, and unlike the modern airfield tracks didn't leave a lot of room for mistakes. Nevertheless the lap record was left at



Pat Fairfield at Bradshaws Brae.

Photo: The Motor.

9' 33" (85.52 m.p.h.) by a Delahaye and by comparison both Brian Lewis in the 2-seater LG45R and Eddie Hall in the 4½-litre Bentley recorded 9' 51" (83.20 m.p.h.).

From the start it went to a sharp left turn known as Quarry Corner where the Lagondas would take in third at about 65 m.p.h., then up to Bradshaws Brae where Pat Fairfield in No. 2 is seen in the opening stages of the race when the conditions were pretty grim. Now down the twist of the Brae, maybe in third all the way with speeds of over 80 for the brave. Then the fast stretch into Newtownards with perhaps 110-115 m.p.h. after shooting the railway bridge. Now the sharp right hand turn across Conway Square where the pavement by the Electricity Showroom was flush with the road so that hub caps were inches from the wall. Fairfield is seen crossing the square with a Riley 'Sprite' behind him of the same type that won the race. Just visible on the right is the Town Hall with plenty of sand protecting the front. This was

thumped at regular intervals all through every race, but as the corner could only be taken at about 60 m.p.h. after such a fast run this wasn't so surprising. Part of the huge crowd that watched this race every year can be seen, all with their feet in the gutter too!

From Newtownards the course ran fast towards the built-up area of Comber. Along here the 4½'s would reach their maximum, perhaps 115 on a good day. Into Comber diving right by the Chemist and sliding madly towards the butcher's shop on the other side of the road. The skilful would be able to exit out of Comber at around 60 and then head for the fast but twisty section at Ballystockart up to the kink by Dundonald railway bridge with over a 100 coming up before the problem of slowing for the hairpin round the house at Dundonald became too pressing. A very tight corner calling for second gear then up to the pits to start another lap.

A circuit that must have tired both cars and drivers yet the Lagonda team always did well.



Fairfield (Lagonda) leading a Riley Sprite at Conway Square.

Photo: Autocar.

In 1934 the M45R's were 4th, 5th and 8th with a battle royal between Lewis and Hall on the 3½-litre Bentley, the next year two of the same cars ran again and were placed 7th and 8th, Hindmarsh making fastest lap by a British car at over 82 m.p.h. So to the last year when the Lewis/Hall battle was re-enacted again, and Hall for the third year running finishing second. Poor Brian Lewis who hung on to Hall so long with the 2-seater car then lost most of his oil and with it much of the bearing metal, limped home to finish 14th.

How stands the circuit today? Does Niblock still have the Chemist shop at Comber, are there still prime cuts of meat at the butchers who nearly lost his window so many times? Is the level crossing still there and the railway bridge at Dundonald? Has the pavement been raised in Conway Square and does the advertisement hoarding still say that Charles Hurst in Belfast deals in A.E.C. motor vehicles?

Almost a lifetime away yet most of the cars remain, and a good many of the brave men that

drove them can still look back to an age when a sports car meant what it said and was not a racing car with a fibre glass shell over the top.

M.H.W.

Pub Meets

Harry Gostling and Ron Kerridge are organising a pub meet during the Summer months at the ANGLERS' HOTEL, STAINES. It will be held on the second Wednesday of each month starting April until October. Harry and Ron will be at the hotel to welcome members (and prospective members) at 8 p.m. A tea party during the Spring is being organised at the same venue. Details of this are being circulated separately.

THE STAR, RUSPER, near HORSHAM, SX. will be the scene of a new pub meet on the last Friday of each month. Organiser: Clifford Griffiths.



Overland to India

London — Delhi 1965

THE OVERLAND ROUTE TO INDIA IS BY NO MEANS reserved for the pioneer; buses and Land-Rovers go out in droves each year; in fact I met a man in Delhi who had just spent nine months cycling out.

For our attempt, Peter Surman and I chose a 3-litre tourer, which I had bought in 1963. After a season's racing and rallying in 1964, I decided that she ought to be capable of making the journey east, despite the sceptics, who said that if we left the car unguarded for more than a few minutes we would regret it; more likely than not, on our return, we would find the car devoid of wheels and its tonneau slashed and everything of value gone.

One cold blustery day early in March found us at the Dover docks, with the Lagonda pouring forth clouds of smoke as we coaxed her up the steep ramp into the waiting cross-channel

steamer *Twickenham Ferry*. I must confess that at this stage I did not view the future with confidence; especially when I remembered that the abortive attempt to drive to Dover one week earlier had ended abruptly with the car embedded firmly in the snow drift no more than three miles from my home in Shropshire.

At any rate we were on board a ship. Steaming towards France, behind us lay three frustrating months, during which time visas had been acquired, inoculations had been withstood, letters had been written to any firm who might be benevolent enough to supply some form of aid; and the car had been prepared so far as time and money would permit. A major modification was the fitting of an M.35R engine, as the original one had shown a marked dislike for high speeds by allowing its gudgeon-pins to cut some impressive tram-lines in the bores!

France, at this time of year, was no warmer than England, so from Dunkirk we drove through France at speed, spending the first night near Chartres in a barn with vast numbers of guinea fowl for room-mates. In these early days our daily routine was far from being polished, the unpacking and repacking of the car, the cooking, washing and other chores taking up too much time. Two days later we were over the frontier and into Spain at San Sebastian; from here we crossed over the Pyrenees and continued south, sometimes in torrential rain through Burgos, Madrid and Granada.

The road through Spain was good and the country through which it passed abundantly colourful; first by the somewhat forbidding pass over the Pyrenees, with the gold, purple and deep green of the vegetation and the rich red soil with its rows of olives or vines. Frequently there appeared small villages, clustered round their tiny churches. Into one of these villages, which always lie off the main road, we ventured one morning, and were received by a dozen beaming Spaniards, who immediately took Peter and me to inspect their wine cellars; there we indulged in an enjoyable drinking bout; it is

considered good etiquette for all to use the same glass, never draining the glass completely before topping up again.

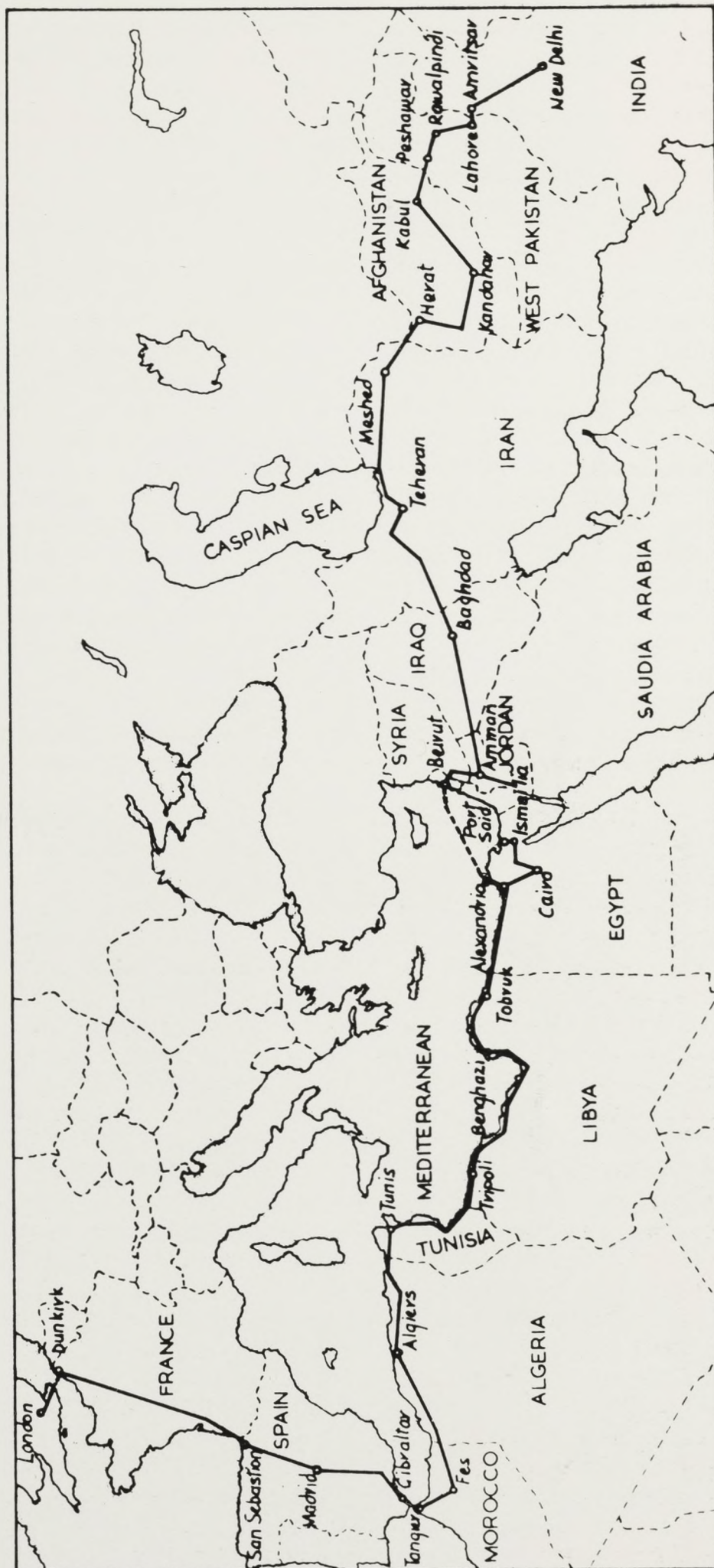
The next stop was Gibraltar, which we reached one week after leaving England. Entry into Gibraltar was tedious due to the go-slow in operation at the Spanish customs. The tools, which were strapped to one of the running boards had been stolen in Madrid and it took some time to find some suitable replacements on the Rock.

On the morning of the 17th March the Lagonda took to the sea once more, this time on board the *Mons Calpe* (far better than the cross channel steamers). Three hours later we were in Africa; Tangiers used to be an international free zone and still has much of the flavour of such an area. Our arrival created something of a stir and we soon found ourselves installed as house guests in a fashionable area. In the cafés of Tangiers, police 'inspecteurs' rub shoulders with smugglers and boot-leggers; 'laissez-faire' seems to be the watchword.

After a few liquor laden days here, we took to the road again and followed the Atlantic coast for a short while. I was sorry to leave behind



LONDON - DELHI ROUTE 1965



the long sandy beaches, the breakers rolling over them in endless profusion, when we turned east for Fez. From here one can see the beginnings of the Atlas mountains and we were pleased to spend the night at the home of a French farmer who gave us as many grapefruit and oranges as we could contrive to fit into the car!

However, the following day was not so successful; interrupted by a sandstorm while tightening the fan belt, I jumped into the car to drive back to shelter; there was a sickening thud as the fan ploughed into the Lag's expensive honey-comb radiator. I dared not look at Peter; on opening the bonnet, I saw the fan firmly embedded—water was gushing forth. In my hurry I had left one nut undone with disastrous results. Eventually we did find an Arab mechanic, who passed an afternoon pouring solder over the radiator, which as a result was still less inclined to hold water. It was not until we reached Algiers that the radiator was finally repaired professionally.

Algeria was probably even more spectacular than Morocco; twisting mountain roads, fertile countryside and occasional glimpses of the Mediterranean.

Trying to take advantage of their cheap petrol, we arrived at the Tunisian frontier with the bare minimum of fuel in the tank; unfortunately the nearest filling station was fifteen miles away and a rather large hill lay ahead. We were only able to continue after parting with our meagre supply of whisky in return for some dirty and evil smelling petrol syphoned out of a dirty and evil smelling Citroen. Driving through Tunis, an undistinguished but efficient and modern capital, we spent a night on the beautiful Gulf of Hammamet with its rows of cypress trees, lemons and mandarines.

So far the roads had been well surfaced. After some early ignition and tyre troubles had been sorted out, the Lagonda went well and, passing through Tunisia, we covered over 800 miles in two days. On the 1st April the Lagonda rumbled gamely into Tripoli, the thriving part of Libya, with almost 4,000 miles to her credit.

As we drove into Tripoli on that clear April day, I heard a shout from the pavement and saw a familiar face among the crowd. This belonged to a news reporter, whom we had last seen when leaving London; he had there represented papers of Pakistan and India; now it appeared he had been posted to Libya. As a result a story of the

Lagonda's exploits was splashed across the Libyan newspapers both Italian and English.

Soon we headed east once more, along the old 'Eighth Army' coast road through Sirte to Benghazi—about 800 miles. Since it was first laid down over twenty years ago, its condition has not improved. Over this road through the lonely desert our speed was limited to 10-15 m.p.h. much of the time due to unceasing corrugations.

At the junction between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, we passed through the solitary Marble Arch (reminder of the war in Africa)—despite the frantic waving of the customs officials who wanted us to go round it.

Benghazi was reached as nerves were stretched to breaking point by the constant jarring that the Lagonda had been undergoing; but it was not long before we had found the 'Wavell' barracks, where the 14/20th Hussars made us welcome for the night. Off to an early start, passing through Barce and Derna, we saw more productive land. By nightfall we were approaching the Egyptian frontier, having passed Tobruk, that natural port, so vital in 1942-43, now the residence of King Idris.

After crossing the frontier, we soon became aware that there are different standards in Egypt than in most other countries. There was no official petrol station, so we had to bargain with the headman of the village for the foul smelling liquid that went by the name of petrol. This individual assured us that the petrol was first grade (it was actually 60 octane), refused to change money at anything approaching the official rate and helped himself to whatever he fancied from the car, when, somewhat aroused, I objected, he indulged in a tirade of invective against the imperialist British—"come to exploit the poor Egyptian people"!

After this sideshow the Lagonda took to the road for Alexandria, passing through Mersa Matruh and El Alamein, where we paused to visit the war memorial to soldiers killed in the last war; however, we found that hordes of Egyptian school children had arrived there first and were merrily playing games among the gravestones.

On the afternoon of the same day we entered Alexandria, which appeared to me as one large, festering slum, though no doubt an active enough port. Hurrying out of Alexandria, bound for Cairo we realised that the petrol tank was empty; fortunately our route passed the airport,

where we called at the refuelling base. With 15 gallons of aviation spirit taken on board from a fuel tender, the quality of the earlier fuel was to a great extent offset. The desert route to Cairo from Alex covers 130 miles and intermittent sandstorms provided frequent diversions for the open Lagonda's occupants, our goggles in place as we thundered along the swirling desert road; eventually the sand caused the throttle to jam open, which made for exciting driving. The Pyramids merited only a cursory glance as we drove, tired and saturated with sand, into Cairo, the sprawling capital of the United Arab Republic.

One of the problems now facing us was that of crossing into Jordan and so continuing the journey east. This is extremely difficult, as Israel lies between Egypt and Jordan and if we had entered Israel, no Arab country (Iraq, Jordan, Syria) would have admitted us afterwards. Cairo was occupied in an Islam feast and so, our enquiries there having produced no results, we decided to drive along the good road through the desert to Ismailia, the headquarters of the S.C.A. Here we were made welcome and assured that the matter would receive their attention. Would we meanwhile be their guests at the Casino palace hotel in Port Said. After being issued with a pass to drive along the 'canal' road that night, we passed the check points and drove up the canal. "Dim your lights so as not to dazzle the ships", we were told. It was an intriguing run, seeing the huge ocean-going liners and cargo boats looming out of the desert immediately alongside us.

I would not normally choose to spend a week kicking my heels in wretched and indifferent Port Said. However, that is precisely what we now did, staying at the inaptly named Casino Palace.

One week later we were finally told that at no cost could we be permitted to cross to Jordan by means of the Suez Canal. There was a ship leaving Alexandria for Beirut the following morning at 9.30 a.m. It would therefore, be necessary to drive through the night, via Ismailia and Cairo, in order to catch the boat. The Lagonda rose to the occasion splendidly, and following the Delta highway through the fertile Nile countryside, she had pounded her way to Alex by 4.00 a.m. Down on the harbour front Peter slept in the car and I found a position on a nearby roundabout, where I slept soundly

until woken by the inhabitants of Alexandria going to their offices!

However, our journey had been a little wasted, as the ship had indeed left Athens on time, but according to the customs officials, had gone off course. It was twelve hours later that the s.s. *Medea* docked at Alex. This was the signal for the passport office, bank and customs to CLOSE. It was then necessary to plead and beg the officials to allow us to board the waiting ship. While the Lagonda was hauled on board, slung between ancient ropes, I feared the worst. However, the talkative Arab dockers somehow man-handled her into a superb position looking over the bows. We were lucky—half the cars were damaged in some way.

The s.s. *Medea* was at sea for one night and on Saturday, 17th April, she docked at Beirut, the booming capital of tiny Lebanon. This was Asia.

D. P. CROW

To be continued in the next issue.

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CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE 2-LITRE SPEED MODEL LAGONDA

Reprinted from "The Autocar", 5th July, 1929

PART II

It will be noticed that the camshaft timing is not affected by the displacement of the head. If there is any question of an error in the valve timing, or if the chains driving the timing gear have to be adjusted, the radiator should first be taken off and then the cover plates shown in one of the illustrations should be removed. There are two chains, of which the lower has the treble duty of conveying the drive to the oil and water pumps and the dynamo, while the upper chain's function is to drive the two camshafts, that on the right being for the inlet valves, and that on the left for the exhaust valves, looking backwards from the radiator.

Chain Adjustment

The lower chain should be adjusted *first* by slackening the four bolts on the lower clamp, inserting a tommy bar in the holes provided in the disc operating the right- and left-hand thread adjustment, and turning this disc until the chain is felt to be at the correct tension when touched with a finger inserted through the special opening provided for the purpose in the timing case. The four nuts should then be tightened home, the four nuts of the upper clamp slackened, and the same method of adjustment used again until the top chain is shown to be at its right tension.

As regards this, the chain should not run stiffly, but should have a little slack, say, an extreme total movement of $\frac{3}{8}$ in. at the finger holes in the timing cover. Lock the upper clamp securely after the adjustment has been made.

The valve timing of the Lagonda power unit is shown in an accompanying diagram, as set with the rocker clearance at .004 in. A fine adjustment is provided to set each camshaft accurately; supposing that the chains have been taken off, each shaft can be reset roughly before the chain is replaced on the sprockets, and the final timing made with the special adjustment, which varies the position of the camshaft relative to its driving

sprocket. The sprocket itself is a running fit on the camshaft, but not actually fixed to it.

A special plate is bolted to the sprocket by three bolts, and a spider is keyed to the camshaft, one arm of the spider being connected to the plate through a steel block working on a screw thread. The drive passes through, from the camshaft to the spider, from the spider to the screw thread, thence to the plate, and so finally to the sprocket.

Setting the Camshafts

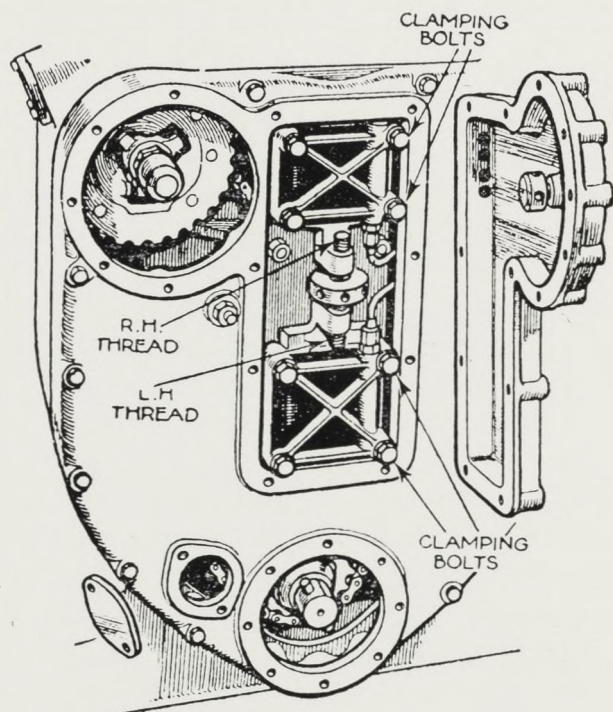
If the three bolts are slack, the spider can be moved relative to the plate by turning the screw thread by means of the hexagon head, shown in an accompanying illustration, and so altering the position of the spider relative to the plate; in this way each camshaft can be set in turn.

If the cover plate has not been removed to disclose the exhaust camshaft drive, the tension of the upper chain can be ascertained by removing the plug from an orifice at the back of the timing case and immediately above the water pump drive. Incidentally the camshafts are held in three split white metal bushes, and, when fitting, particular care should be taken that the oil groove is on a level with the centre line of the camshaft in a horizontal plane.

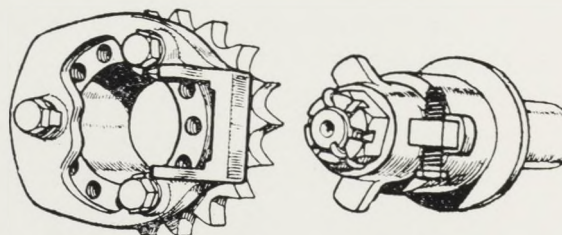
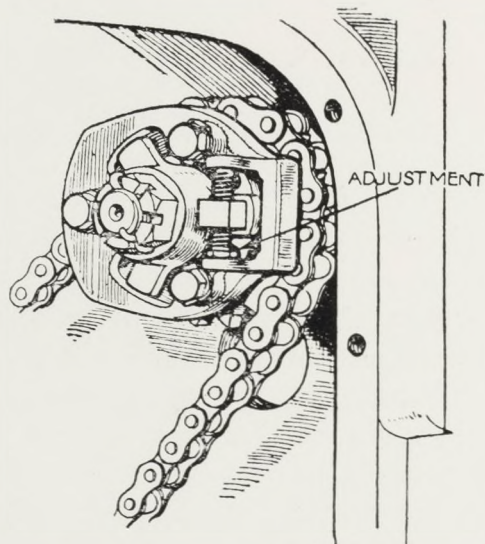
The operation of timing the magneto is commenced by undoing the strap and releasing the two parts of the vernier coupling from their fibre centre. Turn the engine by hand until No. 1 cylinder—that nearest the radiator—is at firing point with both valves closed, as shown by a mark on the face of the flywheel coming opposite to a brass pointer that will be found at the top of the aluminium cover over the flywheel.

Then set the magneto's points to break when the brush is opposite No. 1 segment of the distributor, place the ignition lever at full advance, and carefully engage the magneto coupling in such a way that the central fibre block fits into the teeth of the driving and driven flanges without disturbing either.

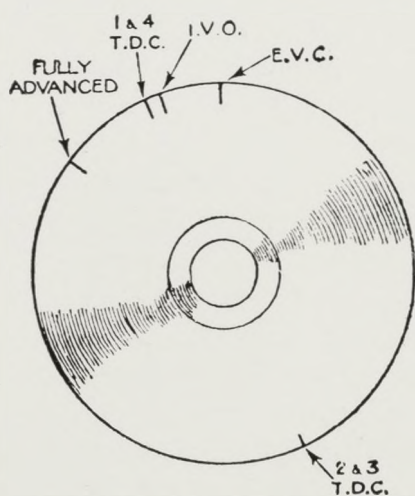
The flywheel also is marked to show the dead centre, the point at which the inlet valve should open for any cylinder, and the point at which the exhaust valve should open for any cylinder. The plugs recommended are K.L.G. 483 for normal use, 246 for fast work, and 464 or 341 for the track; with the last three types the engine must not be left running slowly for long, or they may oil up.



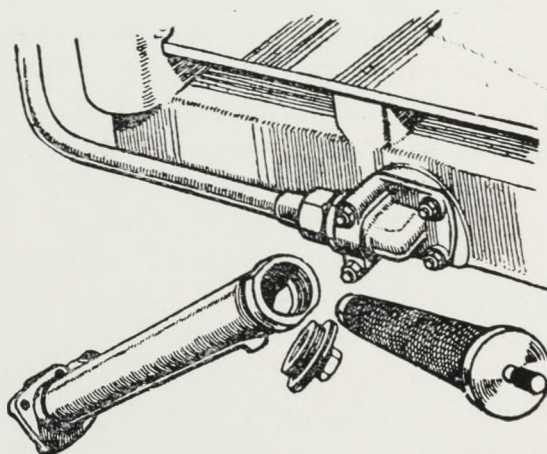
Right- and left-hand screw adjustment and clamps for the timing chains on the front of the timing case.



Fine adjustment for the camshaft driving chain shown in detail and complete.



Markings on the flywheel of the Lagonda to show the opening and closing of the valves and the ignition advance.



Oil filter detached from its casing to show the gauze.

Big and Little Ends

As far as major operations to the engine are concerned, these fall generally outside the province of the ordinary owner. It may be said, however, that the big ends of the connecting rods are marked, so that the lower half of the bearing cannot be put back in the wrong position. The piston should be inserted with the split in the skirt towards the carburettor. The small ends of the rods are off-set, an important point to watch.

In the event of the four rods being dismantled and replaced, the long side of the small end should be towards the centre of the engine, which means that the short sides of Nos. 1 and 2 connecting rods should point to the front, and the short sides of Nos. 3 and 4 towards the flywheel. If the rods are not assembled in this manner, the pistons and rods will not be in alignment and serious trouble may result.

Pistons giving compression ratios of 6 to 1 and 7.4 to 1 are available. Also three different sizes of pistons can be obtained when, after much wear, the time comes for the cylinders to be reground. The gudgeon pins are hollow with bronze thrust pieces at each end. The piston ring gap should be .010 in., and the clearance between the ring and the lands .001 in.—both measurements should be borne in mind.

A Zenith triple diffuser carburettor is fitted, and feeds the cylinders through the slow-running jet for starting. The slow-running jet itself is the screw seen in the centre of a hexagon nut on the top of the carburettor, and is easily removed and cleaned. If there is any difficulty in starting, the best thing to do is to take out the slow-runner and make sure that the jet orifice is clear, as this, being the smallest orifice in the instrument, is liable to become blocked occasionally. The setting recommended as likely to be most useful for ordinary work is 115 main, 80 compensator and 26 choke tube.

Clean the Plugs

With the carburettor set for fast work it is best not to allow the engine to idle very slowly for long periods as here again the plugs may quickly become sooty. From time to time they should be dismantled and the central electrode insulation within the plug body can then be carefully cleaned.

Water is circulated by a pump bolted to the rear of the timing case and driven by the timing chain, a sprocket, and a shaft. The gland is adjusted by moving the circular but on the spindle by means of a tommy inserted in the holes provided for the purpose. The whole pump assembly can be withdrawn by undoing the big C spanner nut close to the pump flange, after which the pump complete can be disengaged from its bracket. The spindle is lubricated by a screw-down grease cup, in which only heavy grease should be sparingly used.

The radiator can be removed by freeing it from the top and bottom rubber hoses and undoing two bolts that pass through the front shield. The radiator casing is not separate from the radiator itself.

The sump contains 2½ gallons of oil, and the camshaft tunnels absorb another half-gallon, the lubricant recommended for summer and winter being Triple Shell. When the filler cap is undone oil can be poured straight in, sufficient space being allowed to take a quart tin of oil, the oil afterwards passing through a gauze to the sump. Attached to a flange at the bottom of the sump, on the left-hand side of the engine, is another big cylindrical wire gauze, through which the oil is drawn into an external pipe leading upwards to the roto-plunge oil pump on the face of the timing gear case.

To clean this filter is a simple matter; after draining the sump the pipe nipple should be undone, the flange unbolted, and the filter withdrawn and swilled in petrol, say, every 3,000 or 4,000 miles. The oil pump itself is of unusual construction, but very simple. The rotor can be removed if the front cover of the pump is undone, but it is essential to remember that when this cover is replaced the lettering (Lagonda), which will be found on the front, must be at the top. If the cover is put back in the wrong position the pump will not function correctly.

The oil release valve is situated in the cylindrical projection at the top of the pump, and consists simply of a plunger backed by a coil spring and so arrange that at a certain definite pressure the plunger lifts and the oil is by-passed back to the suction side of the pump. By undoing the cap nut at the top and screwing down the disc inside, the tension on the spring is increased and the oil pressure correspondingly raised. Oil passes from the pump through the oil junction box on the left-hand side of the timing case;

from here a lead is taken to the main bearings, which are under pressure, to the camshafts and also to the timing gear itself.

Oil is conducted through pipes at the back of the head to the valve rockers, flows down the camshafts and then finds its way back through the timing case to the sump. The oil pressure should be not less than 30 lb. The level of oil in the sump is indicated by a dipstick attached to the filler cap and should never in any case be allowed to fall lower than half-way between the high and low positions shown by lines on the stick.

After the first 500 miles all the oil in the sump should be drained out through the special valve fitted on the left-hand side of the engine underneath the carburettor. In the circumstances it is probably best to remove the pressure filter, since this will need cleaning at the same time. Lubricant having a castor basis should not be mixed with the oil used in the engine.

(To be concluded)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DB 2·6 Defended

Dear Sir—I am getting past the age of standing cars on their ends, but am still capable of driving my Lagonda at the maximum speed permitted by our Minister of Transport. You can imagine, then, my indignation when I read the slanderous statement by 'Flashbulb' about DB 2·6 cars in the current *News Letter*. How anyone can consider such cars 'ugly and claustrophobic' is beyond my imagination. Furthermore, his knowledge of these cars seems to be minimal for he babbles a lot of nonsense about complexity of the engine, unfortunate bodywork and suspicious rear suspension. What a way to encourage DB owners to remain in the Club or to induce new owners to these dignified thoroughbred cars to join!

I used to drive a Selecta Special before the Second World War and since the war have had two DB 2·6's. I have had many tens of thousands of pleasurable miles of motoring in these cars without being let down once, which is more than I can say for the 'old bangers'—even Lagondas.

'Flashbulb' seems only ever to have motored behind a DB 2·6; presumably because he was not able to pass it! The slight wander, characteristic of many cars with all-round independent suspension, can be virtually eliminated by fitting radial tyres. 'Flashbulb' should read again the *Autocar* road tests for the 1949 and 1951 models. The DB 2·6 and 3-litre cars are drophead coupés and saloons, not open tourers or 'convertibles'. Perhaps this is why they are considered to be 'claustrophobic'. Unfortunately, we have to put up with our British climate and if one prefers comfort to hairy ruggedness he will have to keep his hood up some 90 per cent of his motoring hours. Some of us use Lagondas rather than spend time burnishing them up for the occasional pub meet.

My present DB 2·6, photographed last year, not in 1951 when it was built, has done about 100,000 miles; has not been rebuilt or resprayed and yet is in near-pristine condition. I should like 'Flashbulb' to see this photograph (copy enclosed) and consider again his phrase 'ugly and claustrophobic' before I and perhaps many

more DB owners consider severing our connexions with the Club.

Yours faithfully,

G. H. U. BOWIE,
North Wembley,
Middlesex.

[The photograph, unfortunately in colour, is not suitable for printing, but I can vouch for Mr. Bowie's comments.—Ed.]

Goings-on in Malaysia (I)

Dear Sir—Much water has flowed under the proverbial bridge since March 1960 when I wrote my woeful tale of the beginning of the rebuild of the 'Lady'. Indeed, we can all be thankful that I have long since forgotten, and can therefore spare you, the details of the expense involved and the agonies suffered during the many months that followed to complete her.

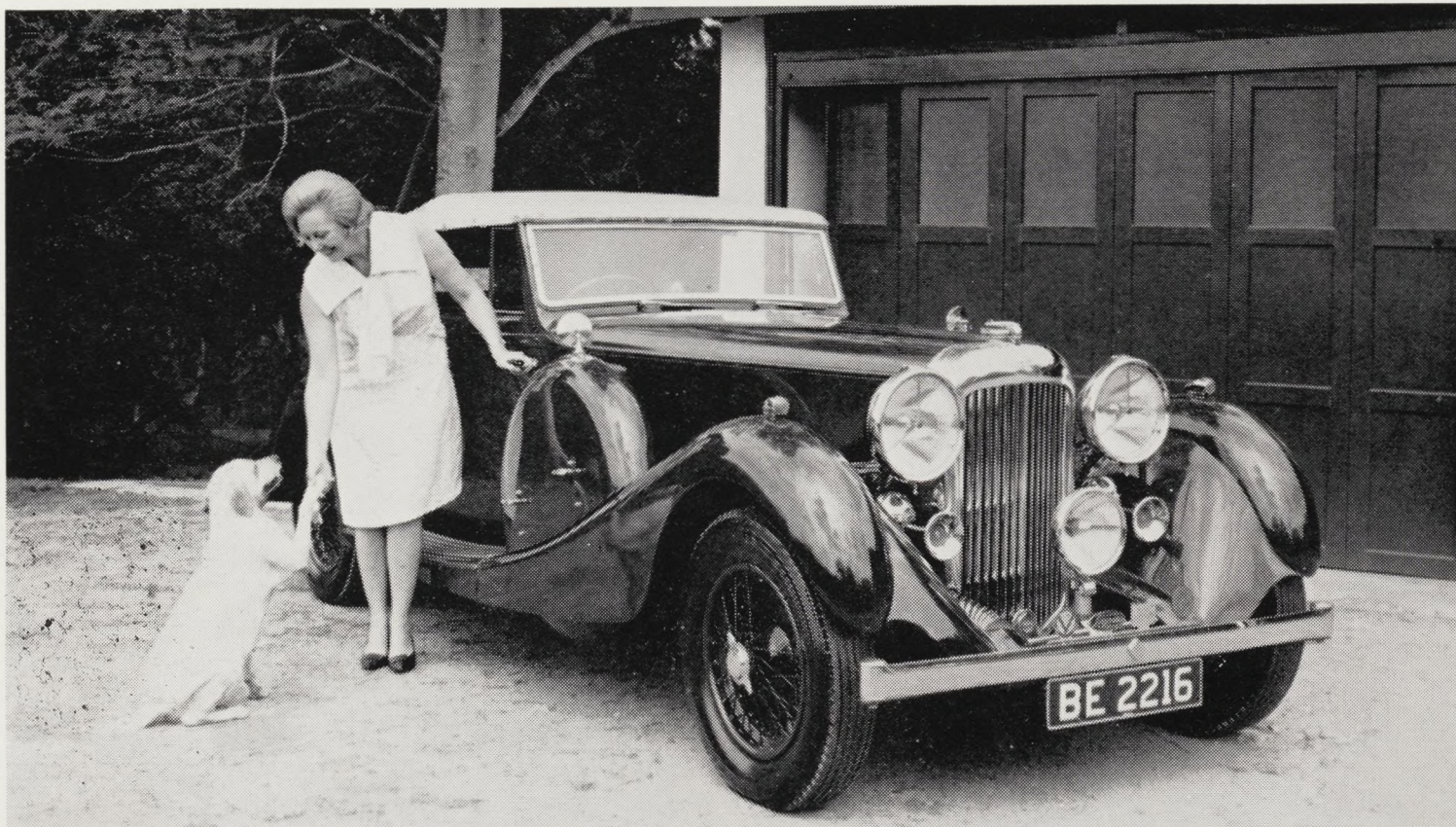
But, what was not envisaged then, there was more in store for me! After listening to the depressing story of the fate which awaited a Lagonda unless we bought and 'saved' her, we set off one afternoon to collect No. 2. A somewhat harassed Gurkha officer awaited our arrival at the club, where we had arranged to meet and, with a sigh of relief, handed over his charge which had been left in his care by the owner before proceeding on transfer. It had been this

officer's first encounter with a Lagonda and he was somewhat astounded at her stupendous thirst for not only petrol but water and oil. He had endured a day in the tropical heat with no less than five punctures to contend with on his 240 mile drive from Penang in the north and was by that time, not unnaturally, convinced that the car would disintegrate or collapse in a heap.

What spirit obsesses the man who desires a Lagonda? For whom, but a madman, could even have 'liked' this shoddy, bullet-ridden and rusty-bodied horror? But, my better-half was enamoured!

Steps were immediately taken to commence the rebuild but providence was not on our side for hardly had the dismantling been completed before we were informed of our transfer to another estate. This entailed the careful and painstaking wrapping and labelling of each bolt and nut, washer and what-not before being packed into crates and the chassis had to be towed 'illegally' in the dark of night to its new abode.

Once more we were faced with inadequate garaging and, reminiscent of bygone days, the only vehicle accommodation on the new estate consisted of stabling for horses, complete with troughs and half-doors! Naturally, most unsuitable for the housing or rebuilding of Lagondas



The author's three most treasured possessions.

and, as previously, the various 'horseless carriages' were delegated the shade of trees until the five-car garage was constructed.

A repetition of the 'Lady' ensued with 'bits and pieces' from Ivan Forshaw, special tyres from Dunlops, hood material and leather from Britain arriving periodically, while reams of paper were written and despatched to body-builders in an endeavour to procure some plan or pattern for a new body.

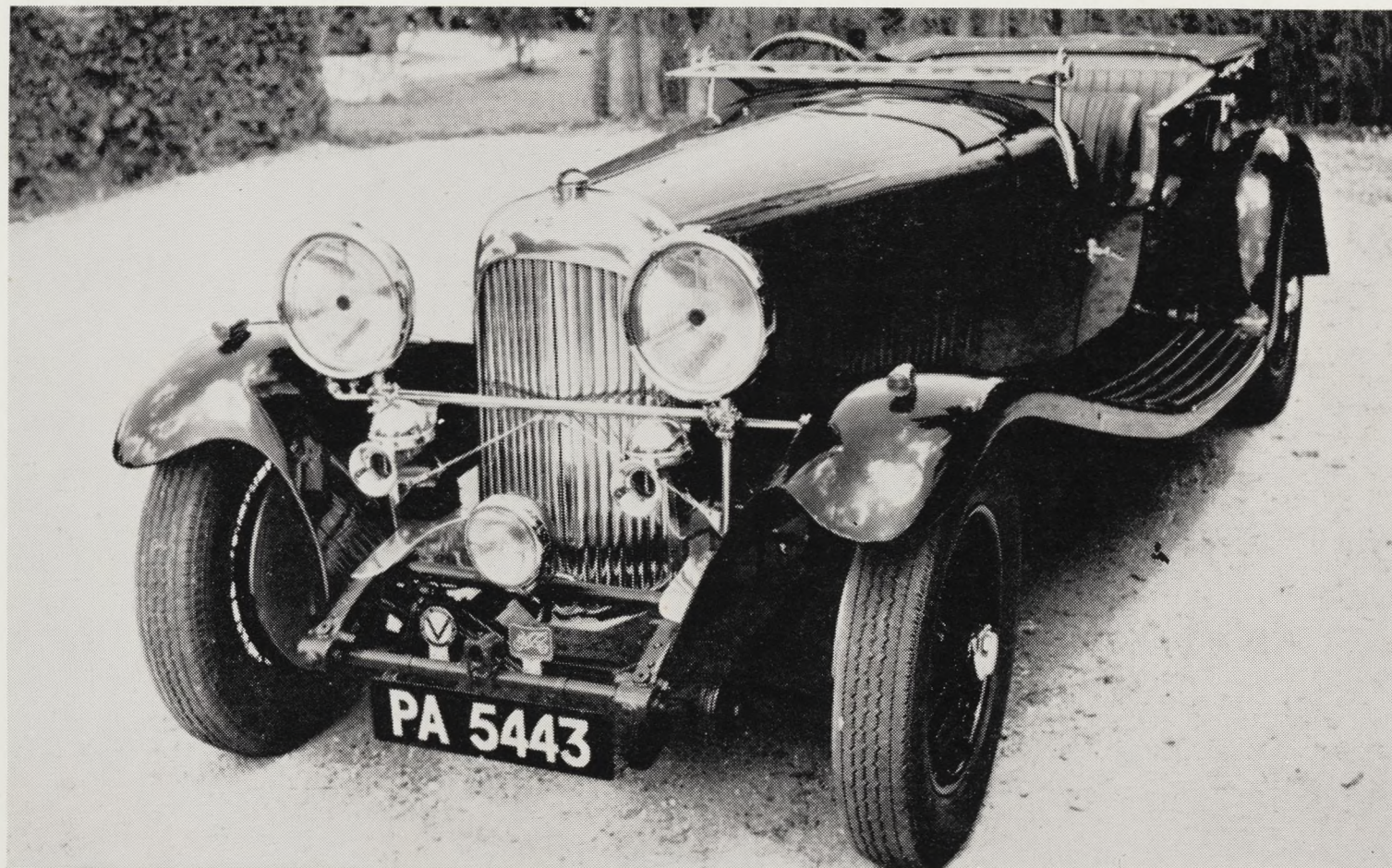
Exasperated, my husband finally accepted the fact that no archives existed for the plans of previous Lagonda bodies and reluctantly, at the time, made arrangements with a local body-builder to copy a standard tourer. For months while the chassis and engine were at the body-builders we could go nowhere in Kuala Lumpur without visiting the workshop of Mr. Soo Thong Yam. I learned to tolerate these visits which alternated between joy and enthusiasm when one more 'bit of wood or aluminium' was seen to be finished to depression and frustration when progress appeared to have ceased.

The Chinese have a remarkable way of taking things literally and every time progress appeared to be slow and Mr. Soo told he took great pains to remind my husband that he had said "Not

to rush the job and to take his time". It therefore served no purpose to inform Mr. Soo that 'to take his time' did not in fact mean 18 months to build a body!

Finally, my husband returned one day with a beam on his face and I knew that I had survived the crossing of another bridge and before we went on overseas leave in May 1966, No. 2 was brought home complete AT LAST looking immaculate and it would appear to my husband's satisfaction.

As before, much of our leave was taken up with visits to other Lagonda owners, to Ivan Forshaw (A MUST!) and scrounging around garages, the older they looked the more interesting they appeared to be. It was somewhat embarrassing on arriving back to be confronted by a puzzled Customs Officer who wished to know what we intended doing with two P.100 headlamps (looking the worst for wear and one broken), four VERY rusty shock-absorbers and various bits of rubber washers (from Quack Young's famous scrap yard), a bale of hood material and numerous tins of Jackall Fluid. One can but feebly reply that these are essential imports and go away muttering about one's husband's magpie instincts.



In conclusion, a parcel arrived from Ivan Forshaw today which has filled me with trepidation especially as it was followed by a remark 'that the petrol meter from Smith's should be arriving shortly!' Without a doubt, there is more in store for me and I might as well accept the fact that I am:

'A REBUILD MANIAC'S WIFE',
Bukit Rajah Estate,
Klang, Selangor,
Malaysia.

Goings-on in Malaysia (II)

Dear Sir—I have only just seen the Summer issue of the *Magazine*, and was surprised to read that David Mitchell had sent you some coloured photographs of my LG45 which were not suitable for reproduction.

I hasten to put things right, and now enclose some black and white photographs of the two cars currently in the stable. BE2216 is in good condition and a joy to drive. As you may observe from the enclosed photographs she is far from dirty!!

PA5443 was originally a Lancefield Saloon when I acquired it in 1961. The body was really past it, so I set out to replace it with a replica touring body. As luck would have it, Roger Gillbanks asked me to look after his standard M45 tourer for six months whilst he was away on leave, and this afforded a good opportunity to have the 'replica' body built on to my, by now, bodyless chassis.

A local Chinese cabinet maker was approached and asked to build a tourer body using Roger's car as a pattern. The result, as you will observe from the photographs, is pleasing in that the copy is identical, and has been expertly done. Aluminium panels over a 'chengai' frame were used, and the whole project including the making of bucket seats, upholstering with leather (supplied) throughout, carpets and painting cost less than £250. Imagine that a new body, professionally built, in the U.K. would cost nearer £1,000!

Both cars continue to afford much pleasure if you ignore an annual Road Tax of £52 10s. 0d. per car!!

Yours sincerely,
RON ARMSTRONG,
Bukit Rajah Estate,
Klang, Selangor, Malaysia.

SACKCLOTH & ASHES DEPT.—In the article "A most faithful old car" in the Winter issue several printer's errors regretfully occurred. On page 11, the top gear ratio should be 3.3 to 1 and not 6.3; on page 12 "my wife's Ford" was misprinted. My apologies to the author. Editor.

NOTE TO AMERICAN CLUB MEMBERS

Bob Crane says that the Magazine will not in future be sent to non-paid up members.

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1937 LG.45 4½-litre	42/6 "
1939 LG.6 and V-12 (one book)	62/- "

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