

THE *Lagonda*

No. 60

Autumn 1967



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

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MAGAZINE

Issue No. 60

Autumn 1967

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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: Townsend's LG 45 Tourer and
Davenport's ex-Monte Carlo Rally LG 45 R.
Photo: J. Davenport

NOTES, NEWS AND COMMENTS

FOLLOWING THE PARAGRAPH ON "HOW STANDS THE CLUB" in the Summer issue, the cards that members were asked to return have come in at a steady trickle.

As this issue closes for press about 200 are to hand and whilst obviously it is too early to draw any conclusions it is evident that there is a big following for the straight forward picnic type of event. The remarks on the cards are most instructive, and in some cases quite abusive and suggest that to use a Lagonda for any type of motoring is crass stupidity. On the other hand a good many are anxious to be informed of all types of sporting event and even want to take part. What is so nice is to see once well-known names on the competition side still eager to keep in touch and the number of cars undergoing rebuilds is quite amazing!

It seems that those that favour socials feel very strongly, and the letter from Ray Attwood that appears elsewhere in this issue sums up the feelings of a good many. What would be nice would be a letter from the Competition side but to date all they seem to say is "send me the regs", and jolly good luck to them too!

By the time the A.G.M. is with us sufficient cards may be to hand to see if any modification in Club policy is thought desirable.

* * * * *

PROFILES. These continue to appear through the letter box right on time every month and to date some 84 have been produced. The layout and photographs are as of as high a standard as in the beginning and it is sad to hear that production may cease with the September issue. If this be correct the final issue will include the V.16 B.R.M., a stirring car to finish a stirring series! Incidentally for those who haven't be collecting these, they are all available and for the tidy minded they can also be had in volumes of 35 copies each.

* * * * *

CONGRATULATIONS to long standing member W. le Ogier, or "Og" to his mates who recently took time off from rebuilding his 2-litre to get married. Maybe the idea is that there will be hot food waiting on his return from the garage. Anyway good luck for the future to them both.

BOOK RECEIVED

"POWER AND GLORY" is a recent new motoring book from the publishing house of MACDONALD & co. Sub-titled "A History of Grand Prix Motor Racing—1906-51, it covers the whole of that span of history of motor racing in considerable detail and accuracy. There is a wealth of excellent photographs, many of which are apparently from private collections which accounts for their unfamiliarity. William Court, the author, deserves to be congratulated on the way he has painstakingly gathered together the stories of the Grands Prix during these years and has nevertheless managed to avoid the text becoming a dull succession of facts and figures. Instead, the graphic descriptions of the many marques, the individual cars and not least the drivers themselves make fascinating reading. Sensibly the text is divided into four distinct parts, each covering a particular period in time. This arrangement enables the reader to comfortably read the events of one period, e.g. the twenties or thirties, at one sitting.

Altogether an extraordinarily comprehensive book. Its 368 pages and 694 photographs will cost you 6 guineas, for which sum the book will provide any serious student of motor racing history with many pleasurable winter evenings' reading.

A.W.M.

* * * * *

Elsewhere in this issue appear details of PUB MEETS. It is not certain whether this is the complete list, therefore would area organisers PLEASE CONFIRM their Meets to the Editor without delay please. This is most important.

* * * * *

COPY DATE FOR MAGAZINE. Closing date for Winter Issue is OCTOBER 20TH. Copy date for Spring 1968 issue is JANUARY 20TH.

COMPETITION CARDS AND REGISTER CARDS

Members who have not returned both the cards enclosed in the last Magazine, should do so without FURTHER DELAY.

Thank you.



"You can just pack away all that old wartime tropical kit and forget those *Overland to India* articles."

NORTHERN NOTES

by **Herb Schofield**

July 1st—Northern Driving Tests

"The right crowd and no crowding." This famous line was never more aptly used. The advance publicity for the meeting didn't seem to have much effect and we relied as usual on the same old people (God bless 'em). Despite the poor attendance the meeting was a success, a great success. All you need is the sun, a handy pub and nice cars and people. We had the lot.

The standard of Lagondas is certainly rising and most types were represented from early 2-litres through to Townsley's lovely LG45 tourer, an LG45 Drop Head from Scotland (are they all keen up there!), and no less than three LG45 Rapides.

It was good to see Joe Unsworth out again in the blown 2-litre after a 3½ year re-build. Fireworks were provided by Dennis Roberts in the LG45 special. Less hairy, but nevertheless much

faster was Henry Coates who came an easy 1st. Alan Brown in preparation for possible future ownership of the Hine/Schofield special complained of the terrible lock on the car—he came 3rd, so it can't be all that bad! A really splendid effort was put up by D. Hoggard in a L.W.B. LG45 saloon and he deserved his 2nd place. Roy Paterson ruined his chances by making a complete hash of Test 4—unusual for Roy. Doc. Rider was neat and fast but suffered from badly adjusted brakes in his M45R. He was closely followed by David Hine in his LG45R. Some of Ian North's and D. C. William's times were spoilt by a general reluctance of their cars to start and keep going. Roberts was seen performing Test 4 some 100 yards away from where it was actually sited, whilst Hine appeared to be doing Test 2 on Test 6, but then anyone who spends 2 hours before the meeting consuming ale, is likely to make a few errors!

Many thanks to everyone who competed, marshalled or just came; to those who are not included above you missed a jolly good Meeting—do please try and come next year. *Cont.*

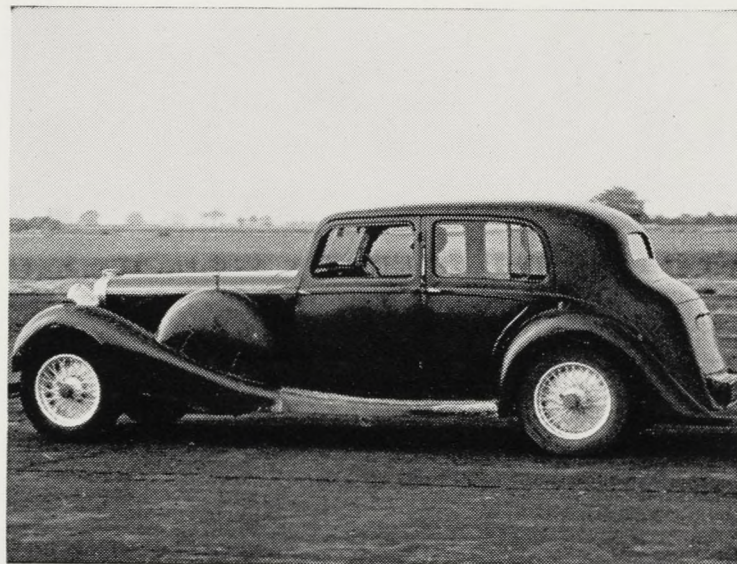
NORTHERN DRIVING TESTS

July 1st, 1967

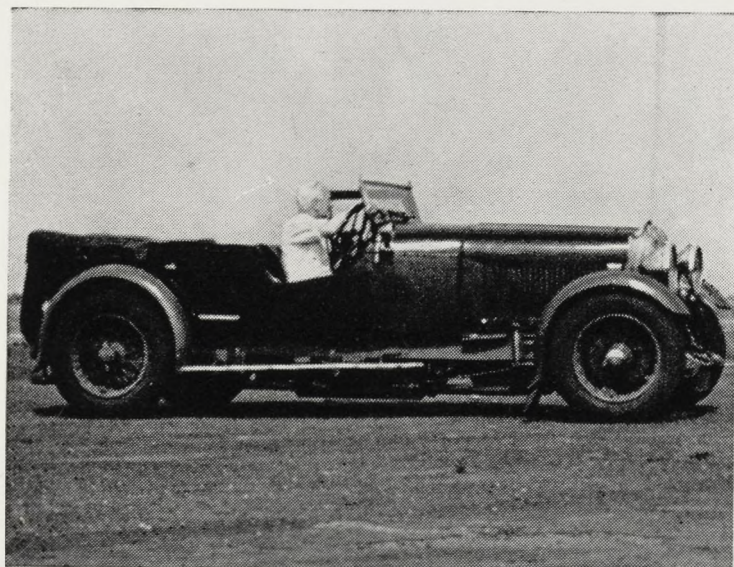
Photos: J. Davenport



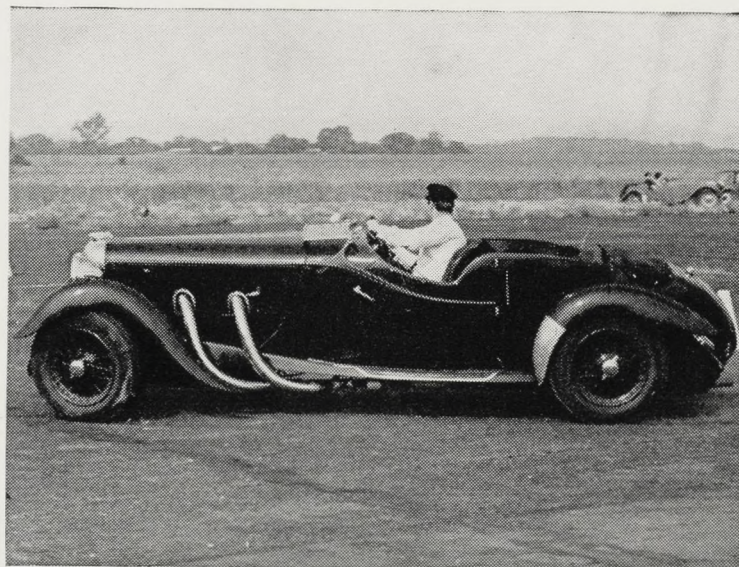
Rare sight—Three LG45 Rapides.



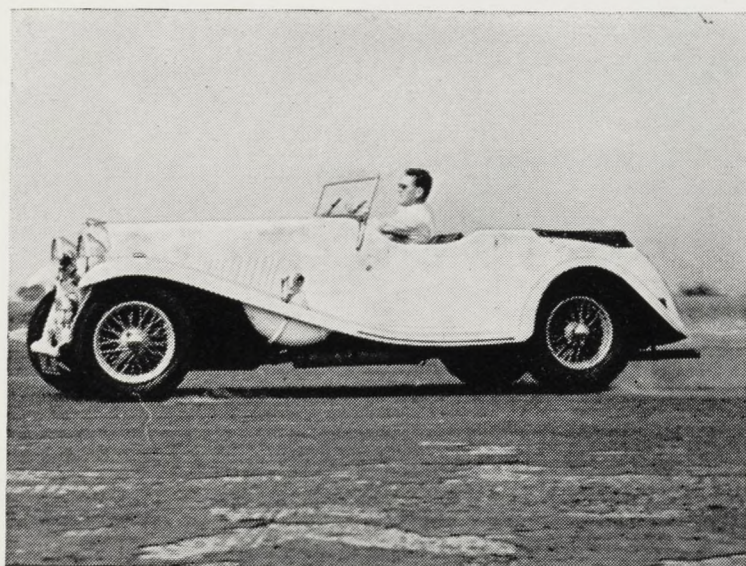
Hoggard in the LG Saloon de Ville.



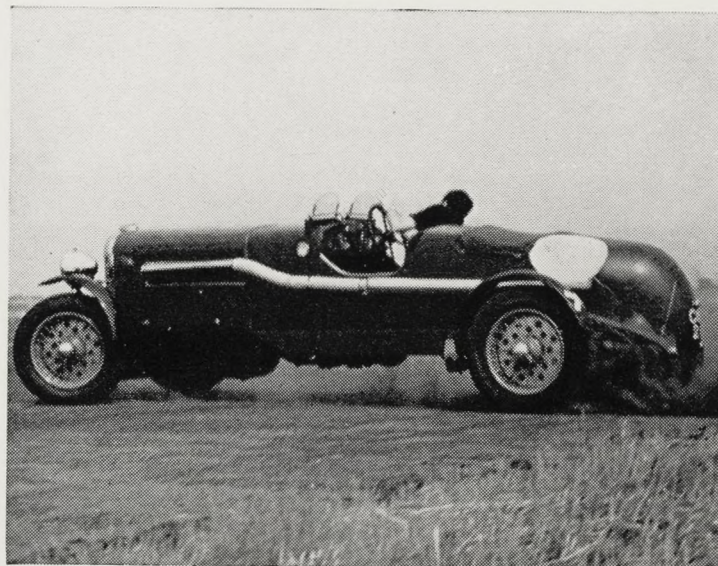
Joe Unsworth's Blown 2-litre.



Hine and his new Rapide. (Another funny hat!)



Doc Rider's LG 45 Rapide.



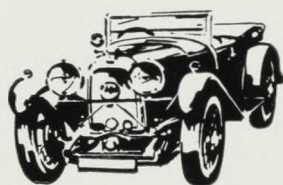
Alan Brown in the LG 45 Special.

NORTHERN NOTES CONT.

Good Service

I am always happy to report on good service and jobs well done at reasonable prices. Greenfield Service Station of Chew Valley Road, Greenfield, near Oldham, are experts at tuning all types of motor cars and have done some very good work on old cars.

Egeston Motor Bodies of Oldham are complete body builders, repair specialists and sprayers. They are at the time of writing making the body for our V12 R and working on a 2-litre. Expert skill is unfortunately never cheap but their charges are extremely reasonable, so if you would like your LG45 saloon converting into a Rapide these boys can do it and they have the drawings. It could be done for under £1,000, which is cheaper than trying to buy an original car. Worth a thought isn't it?



What is a Vintage Car?

Sir,

The following true example of unconscious humour happened to me recently.

I was on an errand in the centre of Leicester when I saw a vintage Lagonda disappear round a corner. I followed it and found it parked, but by that time the driver had disappeared. In the passenger seat was a young man. After a respectful interval the following conversation took place:-

Myself: "Is this a 16/80?"

The Passenger: "No, it's a 1930!"

When I recovered my sanity I ascertained that the passenger was a hitch-hiker student not versed in such matters.

Leicester,

J. H. DE LA RUE.

As seen in *Motor Sport*. Reprinted with acknowledgments.

COMPETITION NOTES

IN THE LAST MAGAZINE THERE WERE NO COMPETITION notes, because there was not very much to write about on competitions. Instead, you had a gloomy report from the chairman on the lack of competitive interest, and a card to fill in and say what you are interested in.

At the time of writing, quite a number of cards have been returned, expressing interest in social gatherings only, but a proper report on this matter will be made when all (we hope) the cards are in.

Having said all that, it may come as a pleasant surprise to some that we are actually *oversubscribed* for the Finmere Driving Tests, about to be run this coming weekend with the Bentley Drivers Club. By the time you read this magazine, Finmere and B.D.C. Silverstone will be old hat, but you *will* be thinking about the November Handicap, prompted by Duncan Westall's punchy publicity sheets. Having actually had the route passed by the R.A.C. for the rally, success has gone to the heads of your competition sub-committee (so you didn't know you'd got one?) to such an extent that they are hoping at last that the event *will* take place on the appointed day, 11th November, and that with the help of several invited clubs, at least twenty/thirty cars will be competing. Not many road rallies are run at all these days, so it will be very interesting to see how much support this one will have. In all probability this will be the last rally to be run by this club, unless there is overwhelming support for the future. Tempus omnia revelat.

Looking back at Curborough Sprint in May, here are the results for those who like to compare times from one year to the next. It is always of great interest to read the lap times of cars at Silverstone ten years ago in some of the old magazines.

Fastest Lagonda:

J. Abson (Rapier), 44.03 secs.

Class G:

J. C. Bugler (2 litre), 57.56 secs.

Class H:

M. Sherwood (Rapier), 48.08 secs.

J. S. Buxton („), 51.53 secs.

J. F. Organ („), 53.71 secs.

J. A. Wood („), 60.42 secs.



Kibble's M45R.

Photo: Arnold Davey

Class J:

- R. W. Kerridge (Rapier S/C), 48.67 secs.
- D. Hine (4½ litre), 49.29 secs.
- H. Schofield („), 50.17 secs.
- R. Paterson („), 50.34 secs.
- J. G. Rider („), 52.44 secs.

It is obvious from the above names, that there is a regular hardcore of spirited drivers who enjoy nothing so much as keeping their motor cars in top form mechanically, and who are not satisfied with owning a car that doesn't even go as well as its original Autocar Road Test says it should! even though it may win a concours! To own a car that looks perfect is fine, and should be encouraged. To own a car that really performs as it was made to do *and* look perfect—this is the aim of many, the achievement of few. Perhaps this is what competition is about. We compete in the first instance to find out if our car goes as well

as theirs, and from then on we compete to reassure ourselves that it goes a little better; more satisfying!

While we're plugging the competition side of owning a Lagonda it is this writer's opinion that there will always be about twenty per cent. of club members interested in serious motoring with their cars, even though some older ones drop out, new younger enthusiasts are coming into the scene.

The committee is always trying to find out what the other eighty per cent. of members actually do with their cars, and it was with this end in view that you all received a card from the chairman in the summer; the resulting information will be of great interest and help in deciding how the club should be run in the future. A few spirited letters in the magazine expressing an opinion here and there would be most refreshing.

Attention should be drawn to a note of warning in the R.A.C. *Motor Sport* Bulletin for July, with regard to scrutineering at race meetings and sprints. Nobody enjoys being scrutineered, except perhaps Ron Kerridge (or rather, his car!) for fear of being turned down just as practice is about to start.

The notice states that many cars have been rejected for the following reasons:

(1) Batteries badly secured and inadequately covered.

(2) Fuel pipes running through the passenger compartment.

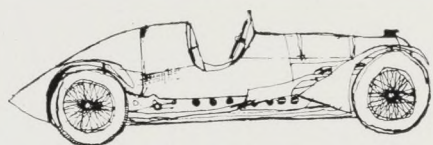
(3) Holes in the bulkhead, preventing adequate protection from fuel or fire in the passenger compartment. The note states that everything possible must be done to separate the driver from fuel tanks and fuel lines, including pumps in some cases.

(4) Catch tanks have not been large enough, and if more than one is used, only the last in line may be vented.

(5) Last and most common is badly secured seats, a real hazard to the driver. If it is loose, bolt it to the floor, at least for the duration of the meeting. And don't forget that mirrors have to be metal backed.

Make sure none of these points apply to you, and make the scrutineer your friend!

J.C.W.



Brooklands Track

60th Anniversary Meeting

Sunday 11th June

WHAT AN EVENT! OVER SIX HUNDRED VEHICLES collected into one spot and when that spot happens to be the runway in the centre of the famous old track! Cars, motor-bikes, racing cars, all old performers at the track! commercial vehicles including steamers which always fascinate me.

The press boys seem to think the event was a bit of a shambles with the crowds getting out of hand. Well, if climbing up the old banking just for the thrill of it is irresponsible behaviour then I was one of them. The reports in the press will put this one to shame and the modest intent is to focus attention on the Lagondas which were taking part.

Fifteen of our cars were noted and the ballpoint pen just lasted till they were all visited.

First mention must go to Mrs. Freda Roberts who had brought along her 1922 dark green 11-9. At one time this car was used daily as transport to and from work. If you read this report, Freda, please make sure that both of you come to the A.G.M. at Egham. The 2-litres were well represented with a comprehensive selection of seven cars—and they were a sight for sore eyes—at least three of them must have been very recently restored. I could not catch the owners with their cars, so I very much regret I cannot give them the credit which is their due. There were three High chassis cars; Charles Long with PK 9201 the 1929 Team Car, the prototype of the Low chassis cars which followed. Then there were two Low chassis cars and my own Continental. A special pat on the back to Harold Golding who had come down from Newcastle in his bright red 1928 High chassis car. He won a prize for the farthest distance travelled. I would have given him a concours prize as well, and despite his mileage there was not a speck of oil on the engine. Incredible! I wish I knew how to do it, the bonnet of my car was kept shut.

Three litres were represented by the familiar cars of Geoff Seaton and Jeff Clarke. The programme mentioned five Rapiers but I only found three which included Ron Kerridge's blown model and J Read's BYP 1, an Eagle, a one-off, specially built for the late Malcolm Campbell.

Four and a half litres produced three cars but sad to tell not a single M45. There was AGE 730, the famous "Scarlet Woman", the LG 45 Rapide of Donald Overy with two LG6's of Doc. Gale and Mrs. Davy, who brought the car along while her husband sneaked off to Le Mans for 24 hours.

If there is ever another meeting like this, and I hope there is, make sure you do not miss it. One thing is certain—you will meet a large number of our members. As for organisation, it is the first time I have been to a meeting where I was met at the entrance by a man on a bike who led me to my parking spot.

A.H.G.

HULL & EAST RIDING MEMBERS NOTES

The key word to motoring enjoyment appears to be . . . co-operation.

Magnificent sight. The city centre of Hull, third port of the kingdom, on a warm sunny afternoon when a motorcade whispered majestically by. It was the Northern Section of the Bentley Drivers Club on a social outing. And every enthusiast knows the turnout expected of a B.D.C. occasion. A most interesting feature here was that the leading car was an open Lagonda, and the Bentleys were accompanied by a second Lagonda.

It began with lunch at the Beverley Arms Hotel, a fine old coaching inn in the market town of that name some eight miles away. Then there was the drive to one of Hull's docks to inspect a modern diesel-electric suction dredger. Finally to Hull's largest dock and its new Roll-on-roll-off Passenger Terminal for the Hull-Göteborg and Hull-Rotterdam services, where there was afternoon tea. The arrangements had the official blessing of the Chief Docks Manager and were planned in detail by John Beardow (whose Northern Face appeared in No. 59), one of his right-hand men. The supporting Lagonda had also to be a specimen equal to any distinguished company, and Ted Townsley and his LG45 fulfilled the role admirably. They not only equalled, they surpassed.

Frank Sowden was warm in his thanks on behalf of the Bentley visitors, and as their Regional Secretary he expressed the view that there should be more occasions of this kind, but on a more official joint basis.

Hermes crews have just returned from another Alvis Owners Club invitation to Driving Tests at Riccall. Ian North (16/80) and Roy Paterson (4½) competed, and with other members and their families in support the Hermes party numbered over a dozen. Last year Alan Brown won the invited Lag/Bentley class, but this time Lagondas had to settle for the Runner-Up Cup. In fact the same car has won this cup for three years running, with three different drivers! The Hermes feeling is that our Committee should invite Alvis members to more Lagonda meetings.

Another joint meeting was Bentley/Lagonda sprints at Curborough. Here again RP competed,

and several others went down in two cars to support.

We are all grateful to Herb Schofield for organising Sandtoft and hope he will forgive us for regarding it as our local event too. As of old, Henry Coates supplied the storage for all the impedimenta, together with a van to transport it. For 1967 however, he also supplied a gallon or two of silver paint. The working party for straightening the curves (if you see what I mean) and applying the paint beforehand was one of our best Saturday afternoons. We were so sorry to see our handiwork battered, but no names! We were pleased to see awards go to the oldest and youngest members (in terms of Lagonda service) Don Hoggard being successful in a long wheel-base LG45 saloon. Ian North was in his 16/80, and it was his first attempt at Driving Tests, although no-one would have deduced this from the way he performed them.

“HERMES”

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE 2-LITRE SPEED MODEL LAGONDA

Reprinted from “The Autocar”, 19th July, 1929

PART III—(Conclusion)

VERY LITTLE ATTENTION OR ADJUSTMENT TO THE clutch should be necessary. The clutch linings are $\frac{3}{16}$ in. thick when new, the spigot is lubricated automatically from the engine, but an additional oiling point is provided through a cheese-head screw in the clutch shaft. The six coil clutch springs are behind the floating plate in the flywheel, and are non-adjustable. The withdrawal mechanism has small oil cups, and the clutch itself an oil nipple into which oil should be sparingly forced with the gun.

The clearance between the clutch fork and the withdrawal mechanism should be maintained at 0.02 in. The clutch stop has two adjustments, one being the nut behind the coil spring, which brings the stop into play later or earlier. For this the locking nut shown in the illustration should be slacked and the tube turned by means of the

tommy holes provided, being rotated clockwise to bring the stop into action later, and anti-clockwise if for any reason it is desired to use it earlier.

The Clutch Stop

The actual strength with which the clutch stop acts upon its disc is varied by the nut behind the coil spring, the tension of the spring being increased or decreased as required. As a rule the stop should be set to come on hard only at the end of the pedal's travel. If it is set to operate too early it may become difficult to change up at low speeds.

The gearbox lubricant is Castrol R, the filling orifice being on the near side, and the level in the box should be about one inch below the plug face. At intervals of 5,000 miles this oil should be drained away by removing the plug beneath the box, the box itself cleaned out and then refilled.

At the rear of the gearbox is the speedometer drive, which, by the way, is altered to suit any one of the various gear ratios available for this car, the variation in ratio being made by changing the bevel. The following ratios are offered: 4, 4.2, 4.4 and 4.66 to 1.

The gears are kept in mesh by locking plungers backed by coil springs, these plungers being behind the square-headed plugs locked by a single metal plate on the side of the gearbox. The upper plunger controls first and second, the middle plunger top and third, and the lowest plunger of all is concerned with reverse. The plunger spring tension should be increased slightly if any of these gears tend to come out of mesh.

Transmission Lubrication

Behind the gearbox are the universal joints, which are lubricated with the oil gun by means of a nipple placed in the neck of the propeller-shaft itself, one at each end. The joints require attention at intervals of 1,000 miles.

At the forward extension of the propeller-shaft are splines which allow for the lengthening and shortening of the shaft when the springs of the car flex. The propeller-shaft itself can be removed without dismantling either the gearbox or the back axle. The rear axle is also lubricated with Castrol R. The filler cap is situated in an extension of the axle casing and the correct level is one inch below the filler plug face.

To deal with the hub assembly is quite easy. The Rudge-Whitworth wheels can be taken off

in the ordinary way and the brake drums are held by a ring of nuts on studs to flanges on the hub so that the drum itself can be detached, thus exposing the shoes. If a question of withdrawing the hub altogether is involved the split pin locking the nut inside the hub can be taken out through the hole provided for the purpose and the hub drawn off with a special "puller", there being no ball bearings in the rear hub itself.

Removing Axle Shafts

Behind the hub are the ball race and two felt oil-retaining washers which are incorporated to prevent oil from the axle reaching the brake drums. The ball race housing is held by six nuts, though at first sight it appears to possess eight. It will be noticed that two of the eight are not actually on the hub, which is slotted to clear them. These two nuts should be left alone, the remainder being undone, and then the ball race housing can be withdrawn and the ball race extracted from inside.

The axle shaft will come away with the hub or can be withdrawn by itself if the latter be detached. The brake shoes have pull-off springs at either side of the cam, and a special Lagonda tool should preferably be used in order to release any of the springs or to attach them again. On the face of the shoe, touching the cam, is a metal piece behind which shims can be placed to compensate for wear. When new the brake lining is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick.

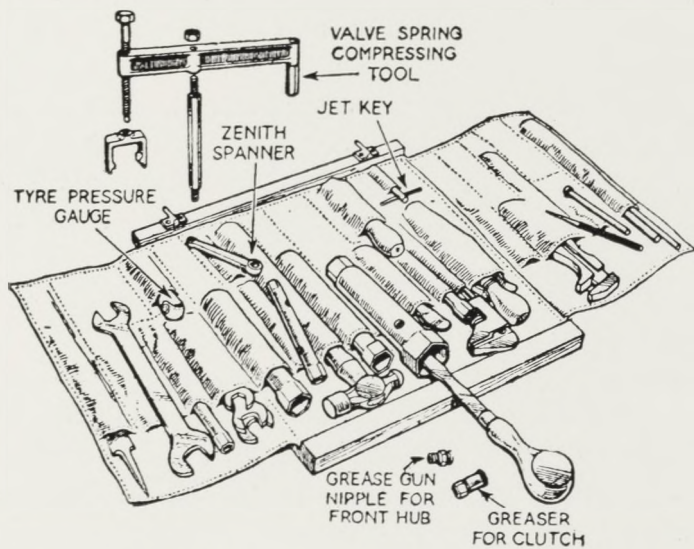
The front hub has two adjustable taper roller bearings, one of which can be extracted from the outside and one reached at the back of the hub. The hub is retained by a single castellated nut and can quite easily be removed with the bearings without the use of a "puller". The brake shoe release spring seems at first sight to be a little difficult to deal with, but if the axis pins are unbolted and withdrawn the shoes can be moved sufficiently to one side to release the spring altogether.

Each stub axle has a plain bush at top and bottom, the axis pin being put in from underneath and secured at the top by a nut, below which is a thrust washer. If very large tyres are used and there is a tendency to wheel wobble, it is best to replace the ball thrust washer with a plain thrust washer.

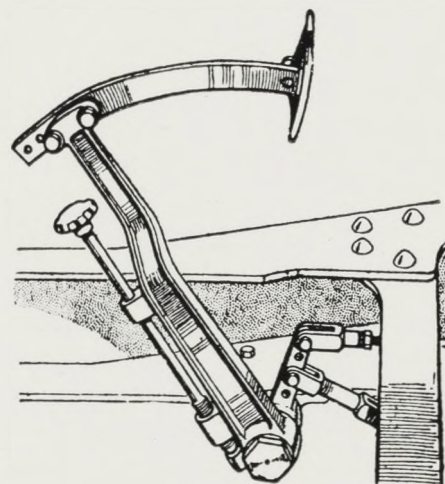
Brake Adjustment

For ordinary purposes all four brakes are taken

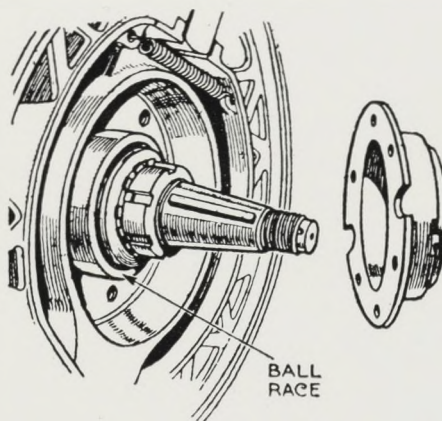
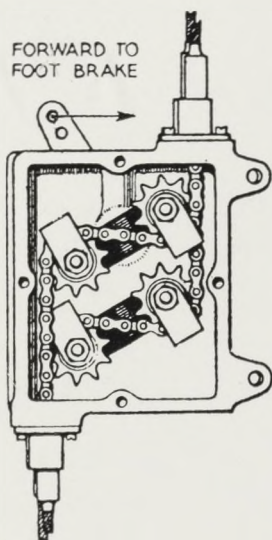
CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE TWO-LITRE SPEED MODEL LAGONDA



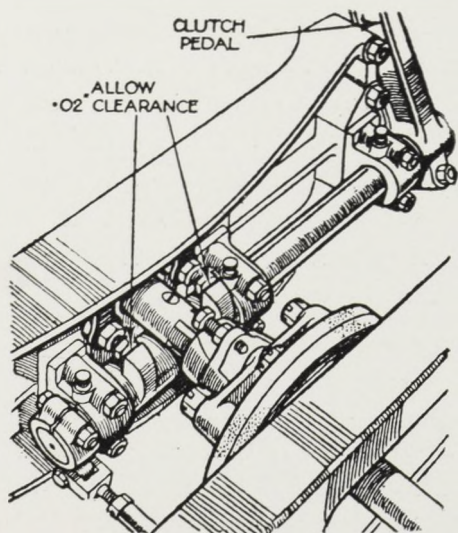
The tool kit, showing the purposes of some of the special items included in it.



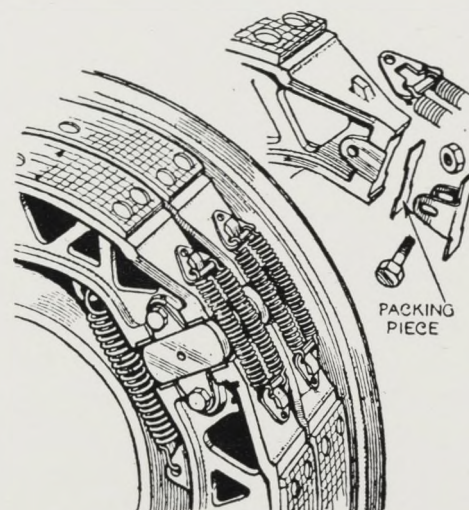
Main adjustment, immediately behind the pedal arm, for all four brakes.



(Left) Brake compensating mechanism.
(Right) Showing the location of the main ball race in the rear hub.



Clearance required for the clutch withdrawal fork.



Pull-off springs and shim method of adjustment for the rear brake shoes.

up simultaneously with the hand wheel adjustment behind the brake pedal, accessible when the off side of the bonnet has been raised, but the cables at the back can be adjusted individually with the aid of special hexagon nuts, and the brakes at the front also have an individual hand wheel adjustment.

To set the brakes properly all four wheels of the car should be raised, the front wheels should be pointing straight ahead, and the front brakes be dealt with first, making sure that the two sets of shoes are applied with equal force. The rear brakes are compensated, and the set screws, which act as stops, should be used to ensure that in the release position the shoes do not touch the drums, the slack in the cable being taken up with the adjustment provided.

The compensating mechanism is in a box by itself, and is lubricated by means of the nipples in the group outside the frame, the oil gun being filled with Tecalet lubricant. The tyre pressures recommended are 33-36 lb. back and front, and 50 lb. for track work.

The thread used throughout the chassis is B.S.F. up to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter, and above that size 16 T.P.I.; the only left-hand threads are those on the revolution counter drive and stub axles, apart from the Rudge-Whitworth wheel nuts.

Finally, the Lagonda speed model is naturally a fast car and equally naturally it can be made faster if its owner so desires, but one of the chief points to remember is that when once a certain stage is passed increased speed must necessarily mean the increased possibility of trouble. The owner must face the question as to whether the one satisfactorily balances the other.

Keeping the Tune

There is a further point. A car in its best tune for competition work cannot, and will not, retain that tune if used for everyday hack-work and cannot be expected to maintain its best condition. With any machine care and attention are repaid a thousand times, much more so in a speed model. It is upon the ability of the driver and owner to discover the first indication that attention is required by some part that everything depends; certainly the size of the bill for attention, adjustment or repair is thus defined. Emphasis is therefore laid on the fact that increased speed may mean not only temporary increased expense, but may well involve the owner in considerably greater upkeep charges later in the life of the car.

Shock Absorbers

In regard to shock absorbers, for instance, it is obvious that if the friction between the plates is correct for very fast work the effect of that friction will be to make the suspension unduly hard for town work or ordinary touring. Similarly, shock absorbers may be tight enough for touring, but, so set, they will not be suitable for speed. Above everything, shock absorbers need to be exceptionally tight if there is any possibility of wheel slip or judder on a gradient.

Important Notice:—Remember this article was written in 1929 and vegetable and mineral oils do not mix!

Consult Technical Adviser before topping up with Castrol "R"!—EDITOR.

BDC-LC CURBOROUGH SPRINT

Curborough, Staffs; Sunday 21st May, 1967. Awful conditions for much of the meeting, but a reasonable turnout of Bentleys and Lagondas. Jon Abson's special Rapier was fastest Lagonda with 44.03, fastest overall being Llewellyn's 3/6½ Bentley, with 42.25.

For the second year running the Club joined with the Bentley Drivers to organise a sprint meeting for both groups of members. The turnout was lower this year than last, with 45 cars (and rather more drivers) competing, and by the end of the day the weather was so awful that, had they known in advance, I'm sure no-one would have come at all. Nevertheless, they did, and on the whole the event was a success.

We arrived towards the end of the practice runs, about midday, when it was still dry. There was a respectable number of members'-and-friends' cars in the car park and most people seemed to have found their way to the 'beeravan' (sort of licensed tea-trolley). In fact everything seemed set fair, and it was even said that Jon Abson was going round faster in his Rapier than was a DB3S that was running. (His best practice time was 42.9, I think.)

Lunch was taken between practice and serious runs, and gave an opportunity to look round the paddock. Colin Bugler's 2-litre had made its normal imperturbable journey from the Southwest (he's right down in Plymouth now) and seems to be the only one of that once-favourite model to complete nowadays. David Hine had



James Crocker, the poor man's riding mechanic.

Photo: J. Ody

brought his shiny new Rapide (the ex-Doc Young car, now green) and his shiny new fiancée, but seemed to pay surprisingly little attention to the car. He was competing in the 4½ Special along with Herb Schofield, joint owner; this car was really going rather well and looked a fair replica of LG45 team cars, considering their claim that all it cost to build was £3 10s. and a whip-round.

Roy Paterson had the ex-Henry Coates 4½, and Doc Rider's M45R was looking extra clean, top and bottom, both cars running as impressively as ever. Rapiers made a fine turnout, with a line of five variously-modified cars grouped affectionately round Elliott Elder's ex-charabanc Leyland transporter. Buxton and Sherwood shared quite the most shapeless Rapier I have encountered, only to make it go faster than Hine and Schofield in their posh 4½, which got up the Hon. Northern Sec's nose a bit. In fact Sherwood managed a better time than Kerridge (48.08 against 48.67 with an extra 100 cc's against a blower) but Ron

maintains he needs a younger driver! Jon Abson's Rapier looks more like Billy Michael's team car every day, but Tony Wood's Ranelagh car is now the same colour all over (top coat, too!) and is very smart. John Organ's Rapier gave its usual unostentatious and reliable performance.

There was one familiar face (roundish, tooth-brush moustache, grinning) that I couldn't place, helping T. Charnock with an Aguar or Jallard or something. I think he even drove it round the circuit at one point. Funny.

When this lot were finally dragged away from the beer van and up to the start there was scarcely time to complete the first set of runs before the most incredible downpour finished all hope of improved times, and pretty nearly stranded everyone in the muddy carpark. Unsurprisingly Abson was the fastest Lagonda, by 44.03 to Sherwood's runner-up of 48.08. Kerridge was close behind with 48.67, and Hine drove the only other Lagonda round below 50 seconds, in 49.29. Interesting to see how many Rapiers could beat the fastest 4½. At the other end of the scale, Bugler's 2-litre managed to get three seconds under Tony Wood's time in his Rapier. (I think Wood has rebuilt his engine fairly recently, whereas Bugler is well known never to open his bonnet except for his sandwiches, which probably accounts for it.)



Cool, gritty Abson. Fastest Lagonda. Photo: J. Ody

To put the Lagondas into perspective, Abson was 1.38 seconds behind Llewellyn's Bentley, which got FTD, and was, I believe, beaten by two other Bentley's (all three being very special 3-litre chassis with 4½ or 6½ engines) plus a DB3S. Meanwhile Harry Rose in his unblown 4½ was less than a second faster than either Kerridge or Sherwood's Rapiers, and 1.47 faster than David Hine in the 4½ Lagonda.

Results (fastest of two runs, invariably the first) (seconds).

F.T.D.:

D. W. Llewellyn (3/6½ Bentley), 42.25.

Fastest Novice:

A. A. Phillips (Mk. VI Bentley Special), 47.49.

Fastest Lagonda:

J. D. Abson (Rapier Special), 44.03.

Class G (2-litre Lagondas):

J. C. Bugler (2-litre low chassis), 57.56.

Class H ("normal" Rapiers):

M. Sherwood (1,200 cc), 48.08.

J. S. Buxton (1,200 cc), 51.53.

J. F. Organ (1,104 cc), 53.71.

J. A. Wood (1,086 cc), 60.42.

Class J (4½-litres and other Rapiers):

J. D. Abson (1,500 cc), 44.03.

R. W. Kerridge (1,104 cc, blown), 48.67.

D. R. Hine (LG45 special), 49.29.

H. L. Schofield (LG45 special), 50.17.

R. Paterson (4½ special), 50.34.

J. G. Rider (M45R Tourer), 52.44.

Fastest non-Vintage:

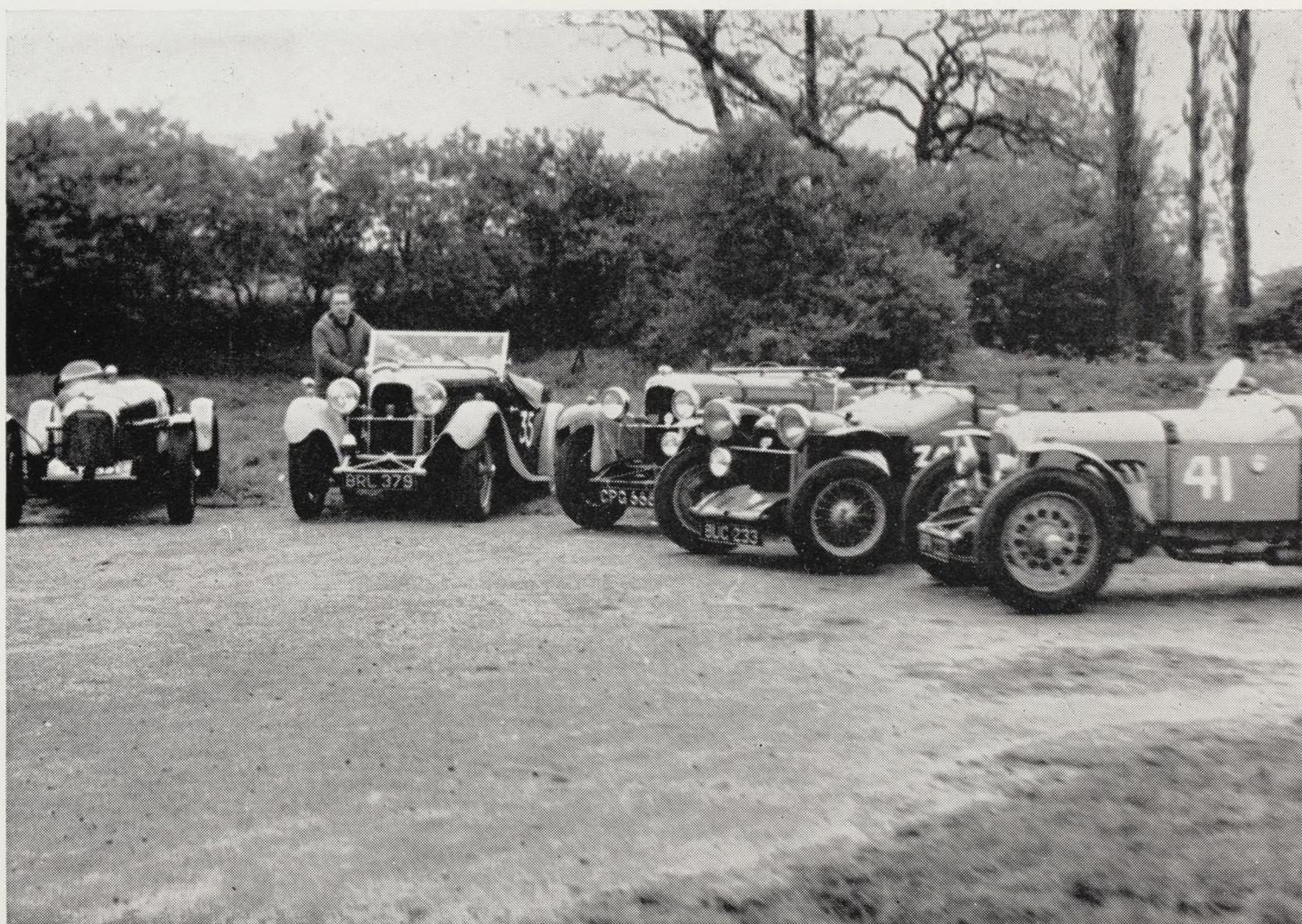
R. Glydon (Aston-Martin DB3S), 42.41.

Other fast times:

J. T. Williamson (3/4½ Bentley), 42.90.

H. P. Hine (3/6½ Bentley), 42.84.

Post-script: Elliott Elder invested in his hot-and-cold running, all-mod-con bus because it was cheaper to run than the V.12. Colin Bugler agreed, with James Woollard, that his timing chains rattled a bit, but pointed out that he hadn't looked at them for a few years. Alan Brown was still re-building, and hadn't got his chassis on in time for the meeting. J.O.



Tony Wood lurking amongst the Rapiers.

Photo: J. Ody

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

C. G. Vokes, a well-known name as far as filters are concerned, has always had a love of Lagondas. From the following notes which were written some ten years ago and have just come to light it will be seen that he is the man that started the Club that we still enjoy today.

Happy times when all you had to do to run a road rally was to collect a few members, give them a route and send them off. R.A.C. regulations were a lot shorter in those days!

How nice to be able to hire Brooklands for the day, but even nicer to be able to buy a new 2-litre!

M. H. W.

I SHALL HAVE TO GIVE YOU most of the story of the Lagonda Car Club from memory, as I have no records now. I supplied most of the car companies with windscreen wipers, air filters, etc. from about 1925 onwards and got to know Lagondas fairly well, particularly Brigadier-General Metcalfe, who was then Chairman of the Company. Mr. Cranmer, Technical Director and, of course, Mr. Bavin who was their Buyer for many years, and in 1928 I bought from them a new 2-litre tourer. I was then invited to their Brooklands Day. Each year they hired the Brooklands track for Lagondas only and invited all the known owners, mainly obtained from their Service Department lists. These days were most enjoyable and gave me a taste for Club activities.

About this time the Bugatti, Riley and other Clubs were very active and I went to see General Metcalfe to ask if he would have any objection if I endeavoured to form a Lagonda Club. He welcomed the idea heartily and agreed to become the first President. I then wrote to approximately 100 owners and asked if they would be interested to join and from the most enthusiastic replies received I invited about a dozen to my works at Putney and over a cup of tea we formed a working committee, appointed officers, etc. As I had the facilities for office work I became Secretary. Major W. H. Oates (Bill Oates) Lagonda's London Service Station Manager in the Hammersmith Road, became Chairman, and on the Committee were A. D. Jaffe, an R.A.F. chap, J. Sieger, who has been in America for eight years and returned recently, M. Selby, and others I do not remember, eight in all. We arranged a series of day and night trials and hill climbs with the Bugatti, Aston Martin and other

Clubs at Lewes, and held an annual dinner at the Park Lane Hotel.

I remember that Messrs. Warwick Wright, who were then the Bond Street Car Agents, were keen members. I am a little hazy as to the actual date, but have a feeling the Club was formed around 1930, because not long after General Metcalfe died and Alan Goode took over Lagondas and became our President. Lord de Clifford was also quite active. The original number of members was around 180 and about 30/40 cars, including the old original 12 h.p. model, used to turn up to the events. There was a great deal of excitement when the new 3½-litre arrived and also the 3-litre with selector gears.

On one occasion we started off from Chippenham in Wiltshire at 10 o'clock on a Saturday night, arrived somewhere near Porlock Hill and turned off to the left up what was clearly only a cart track and the wheels of my 3-litre (by this time) were rubbing the sides of the track and only by my two rear passengers jumping up and down on the seat could we obtain any traction. I have never been quite sure whether I took the wrong turning but after a mile or two of this track with my foot hard down in bottom gear, I remember to my horror seeing a series of shallow steps in front of me, about 50 of them. To my utter amazement, when it seemed the car must stop, it felt as if some invisible force pushed her up the last step on to the plateau above where the rest of the cars were congregated! I have tried to

PUB MEETS

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

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

LEEDS: Olde Sun Inne, Colton.—First Tuesday of each month.

NEWCASTLE: Red Bar, Ridley Arms, Stannington, Northumberland.—Last Wednesday of each month.

HULL: Tiger Inn, Beverley.—Last Tuesday of each month.

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

STAINES (Middx.): Anglers Hotel.—Second Wednesday of each month, 8.30 p.m.

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

SUSSEX: The Star, Rusper, nr. Horsham.—Last Friday of each month.

find this track since but have been unable to do so, but in the excitement of the moment and the need to get on, I did not stop to question whether I had come the right way or not and have, consequently, been puzzled about it ever since.

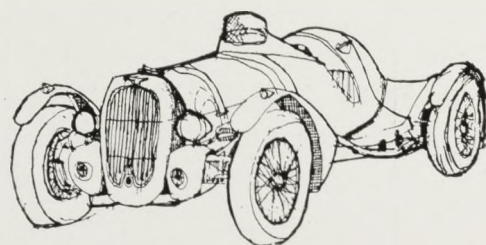
In 1936 I sold my private business to a public company and became so busy that I was compelled to give up the Secretaryship of the Club and this was taken over by Joe Sieger, who was then in Scophony the Television Company, and Michael Selby, who was one of the members of S. Schneider & Sons Ltd., clothing manufacturers with works, I believe, in the East End. I handed over to them all the membership lists, tankards, cups, and club badges, etc. I think two or three more events were organised and then the Club gradually faded and, of course, war broke out, which put an end to such activities.

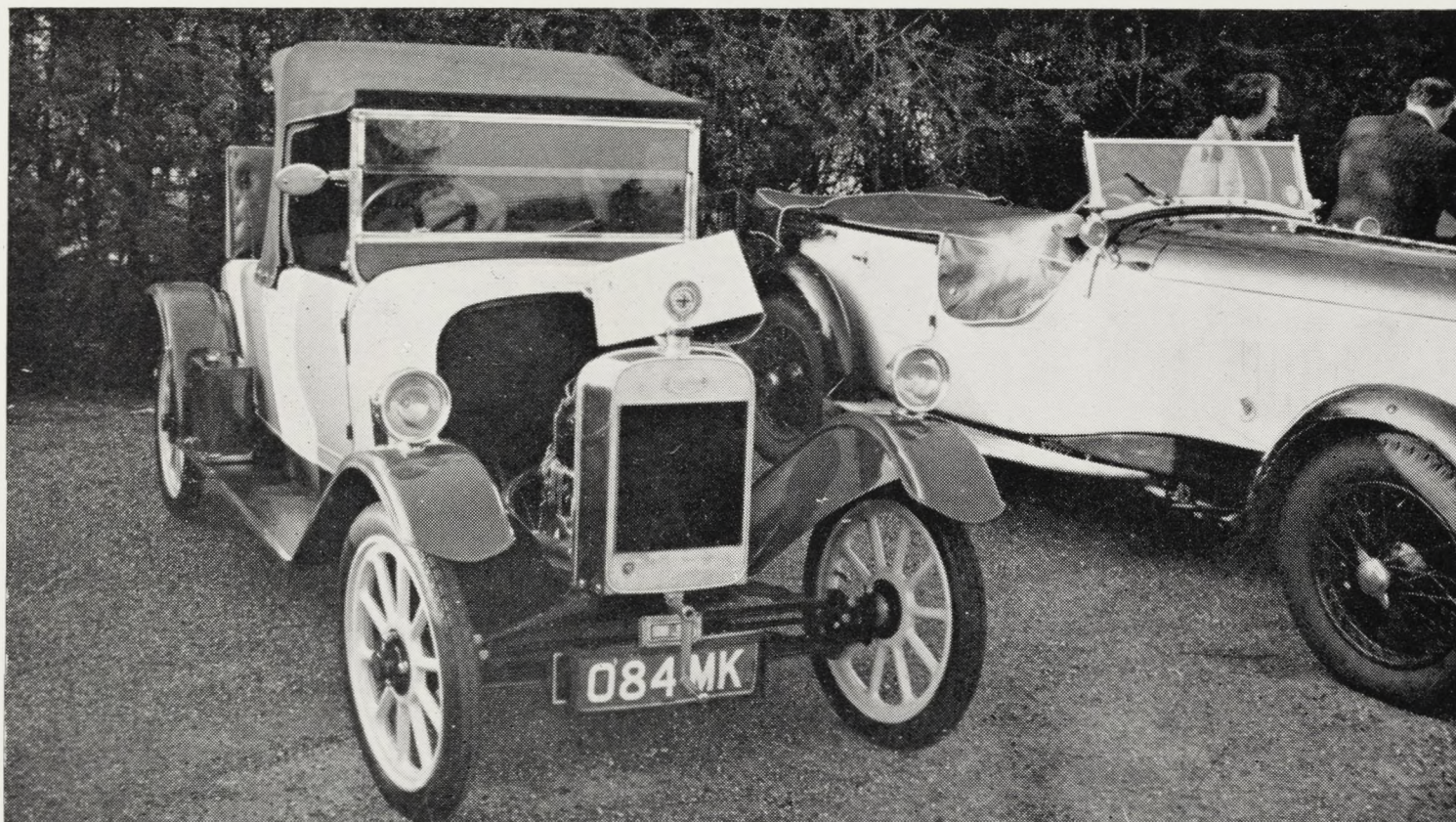
When the war was over Mr. Davies and another Lagonda owner came to see me at Henley Park, Normandy, near Guildford, where I had a flat in the Company's old Georgian mansion, and asked if I would help in reviving the Club and become their President. They also offered to make me a Life Member. I explained that the war strain had been so great that I was in rather poor health, so that while I would like to rejoin the Club I doubted if I could take an active part but would do so if it were ever possible. I gave them Joe Sieger's address and also Selby's, but I think by this time Sieger had handed over all the correspondence, etc. to Selby and I believe Selby was not very helpful.

In our day no news sheet or magazine was published. From memory, most Clubs were formed around the 1928-34 period, when Brooklands was rather in its heyday and although a number of our events were limited to Lagonda owners, we were often invited to meetings of other Clubs and they in turn to ours. It was generally cars of a somewhat similar nature, such as Bentleys, Bugattis, Aston Martins, etc. I remember one combined night trial ending at Broadway, Worcester, for breakfast at 7 a.m. At one period I was so far ahead I could not find any marshalls and turned back to find them to be properly checked in and then lost my way. I was told by a marshall when I did arrive that I should have gone straight on and would have won the trial quite easily. Ever after I have wondered whether one's conscience is always the best guide, as I lost the first prize in a rather nice combined trial.

At times I had six Lagondas. One was an old grey fabric body 1929-30 which I used to race at Brooklands and was quite fast. Also a 1932-33 3-litre with cycle wings and, as I wanted a warmer car for the winter, a 1934 3-litre was obtained. Then as big horse-power cars were going quite cheaply in the war I bought a 1934 4½ saloon as well as a 1935 3½ tourer. My 4½ tourer I will tell you about. In 1946 I was reading an advertisement of a 1936/37 4½-litre maroon touring car which sounded so glowing I did not really believe it. I sent one of my best men to see it at Westcliffe and it was such a snip he bought it for me. The story of this car is quite amazing. The owner bought it and went to France in Munich-year 1938; when the threat of war arose he hurried back to Boulogne and found he could not get the car back to England. He left it in a small French garage and promised the owner he would come back as soon as he could and if he looked after it he would pay him well. In fact he did not get back till 1946. Boulogne was badly damaged and the garage destroyed and he was giving up hope when he heard that the garage owner was still alive and found him in a corrugated iron shed on the outskirts of what was left of the town. He asked if he remembered him as the owner of the Lagonda and the Frenchman said "yes" and took him in an old model T Ford some miles into the country and to the Englishman's amazement started digging in an ancient looking haystack.

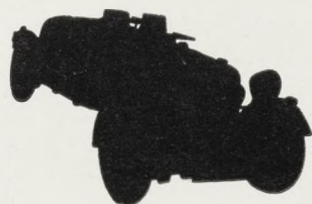
There was the 4½ absolutely unharmed. It just wanted a little cleaning up and was ready for the road. The only thing that happened was while waiting for the ferry the five tyres were stolen over night, as they were very scarce then. The owner gave the car to his wife, but it was so fast she was nervous of it and as he had bought himself another in the meanwhile, he decided to sell it and I became the very fortunate owner. I have done 110 on the Derbyshire moors with no trouble at all in this car.





At the Lagonda Tea Party, Staines. A venerable guest.

Photo: A. Davey



HISTORIC MOTOR CAR PRINTS

Each of the superb full colour prints listed below is available exclusively from Hale-Hamlet Prints. The prints are top quality reproductions from original water colour paintings by artist Brian P. Powell. The original paintings are accurate perspective views of historic motor cars, each one of incredible detail. The prints are offered to Lagonda Club members at a special low rate. They are available unframed or framed in attractive gilt/cream frames.

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NORTHERN CARS & FACES

No. 11

ALAN BROWN

We claim him to be the toughest club member in the North of England—a very necessary quality if you drive a stripped 2-litre special sans windscreen. Extremely successful in competition and twice winner of the Densham Trophy. Other hobbies include drinking and knitting. Alan is photographed above putting a point to an attentive Roy Paterson.

Photo: Herb Schofield.

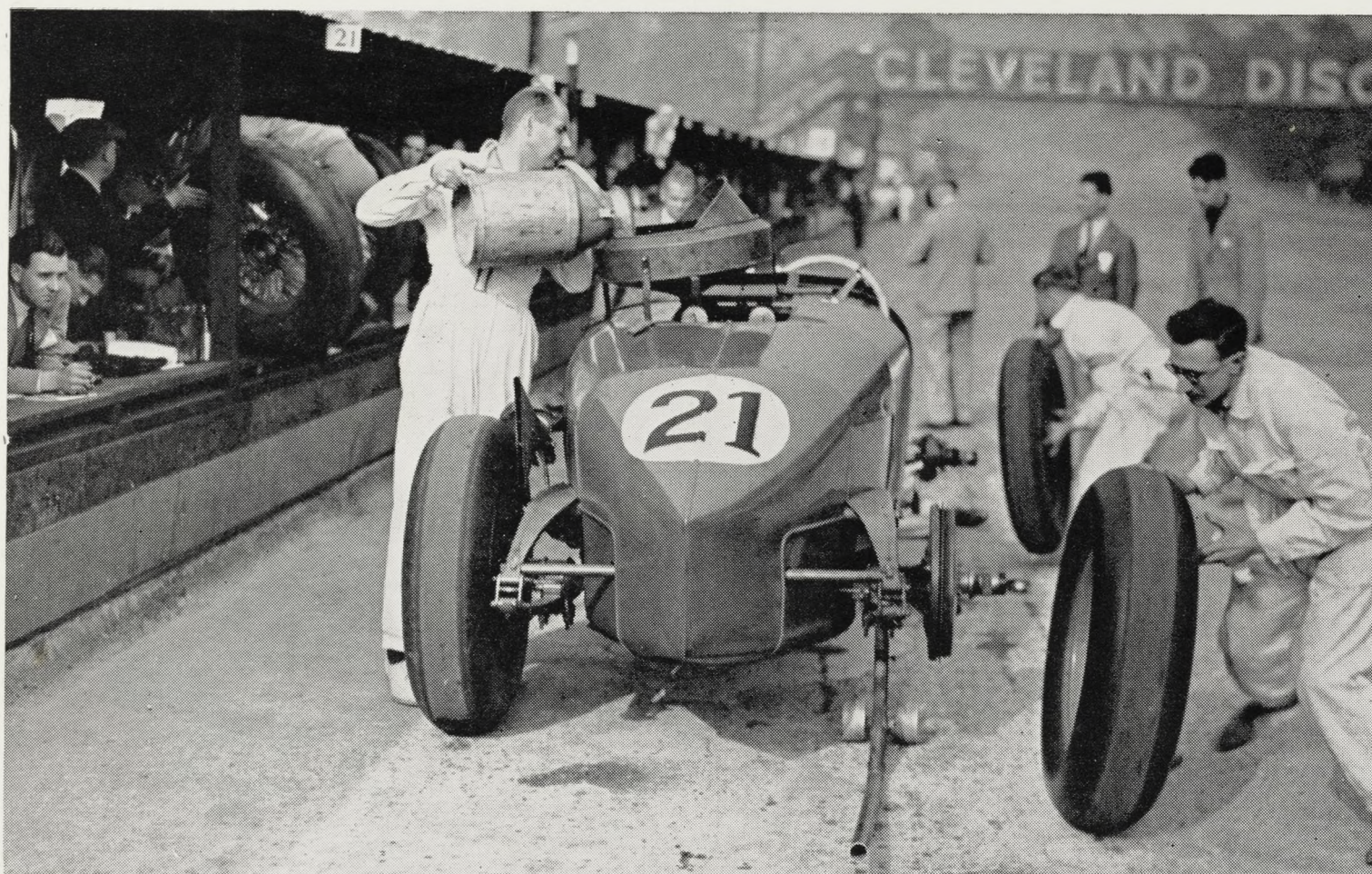


Photo: Courtesy of Autocar

PIT STOP

THE Lagondas entered by Arthur Fox in so many events achieved several glorious deeds, and one of the finest was the third place in the 1936 500 Mile Race at Brooklands. Here one of his LG.45R sports cars did battle with out-and-out racing cars and the result speaks for itself when it is remembered that the average speed was over 113 m.p.h. including the pit stops, one of which is shown in these photographs.

The first photograph shows the car just after it had stopped, the first five gallon churn of fuel is going in and the old wheels are coming off. In the pit holding the new huge (7'00 x 21) rear wheel and tyre is Arthur Fox himself. In the distance can be seen the curve of the track as it goes up to the Members banking and so round to the dreaded "bump".

The second photograph shows the new wheels going on, the vast 40 gallon tank still taking fuel and now the spare oil reservoir is

being topped up. In the background the figure with the white armband standing by the pit counter is Hugh McDonnell the scrutineer.

The third photograph seems to suggest that the mechanic at the tail is satisfied that the tank is filled to the brim, the wheels are being tightened and the chap on the ground at the front is making sure no con. rods are through the side! The Hon. Brian Lewis who shared the driving with Earl Howe walks to the car as the pit is made tidy and the wheels put back on the counter.

Note the absence of front brakes, something often found on outer circuit cars, and the neat front dumbiron fairing. These features together with the lack of road equipment were the only "improvements" made from the trim in which it was prepared for Le Mans.

The following year of course carrying full road equipment and a passenger this LG.45R covered over 104 miles in the hour on the same track.

M.H.W.



Both photos by courtesy of Autocar



SOME BIG SPORTS CARS OF THE THIRTIES

L. S. MICHAEL

in a masterly analysis remembers and compares a few really great motor cars of thirty years ago.

(Reprinted from Lagonda Magazine No. 12)

IT IS INTERESTING TO COMPARE THE PERFORMANCE of some modern high quality sports cars with that of their pre-war equivalents. In the course of such discussion with the owner of a Bristol we found ourselves gradually comparing not pre-war and post-war, but the various sports cars of the thirties with which we were familiar. It was a subject so absorbing, and so controversial that the moderns were completely forgotten.

We soon reached the stage where recourse to sets of ancient *Autocars*, *Motors*, *Motor Sports*, and *Speeds* became necessary, to establish some facts in a conversation which was becoming based on the inaccurate memories of inaccurate speedometers, and stop watches specially adjusted to suit the cars we each supported most strongly.

The results of this research made me think that the readers of this magazine might find it as interesting as we did. For the sake of space I have decided to restrict the field to the large "British Sports Saloons", I have actually owned, or driven frequently.

In some cases I have driven several examples of the same model. The difference between for example, a really well kept Lagonda M45 of 1934 and a shabby fugitive from the scrap heap of the same type, is so enormous that I have omitted those models of which I have only known representatives in poor condition.

The earliest car in point of date of manufacture that comes within my scope is the TALBOT 105 of 1933. The lovely example which I was allowed to drive, exercised such a spell over its owner that I was never permitted to exceed 40 in third or 60 in top, at which speeds it was evident that no strain was being imposed on any of its precious, and difficult to replace, parts.

The owner was convinced that "105" meant that it had a maximum speed of 105 m.p.h. To prove this he drove at 80 on many occasions and always informed me that there was so much in hand that a 100 would come up easily if he tried!

I can only say that if he had trodden on it any harder he would have needed a new set of floor boards. Nevertheless a similar car road tested, had done a timed mean speed of 88 m.p.h. with a one way best of nearly 92. For a large vehicle weighing 35 cwt. with an engine of only 3-litres capacity, that was good going indeed.

The handling and road holding of this model were excellent though naturally the suspension was very firm. Above 70 m.p.h. one knew that the engine was working hard and it made a fair amount of noise. The brakes were good though some work at high speeds. The example I drove was equipped with a "help yourself" (also called preselector) gear box. I am not sure if this was standard, in 1933. The Talbot 105 although the least powerful of the cars in this review, managed 0-60 in 19.4 seconds which is sprightly even for today, and it will always be remembered as a thoroughbred of real character. Of course the open sports versions were lighter and much faster, while the specially prepared Brooklands cars reached 120 m.p.h. but I am not dealing with such exciting creatures.

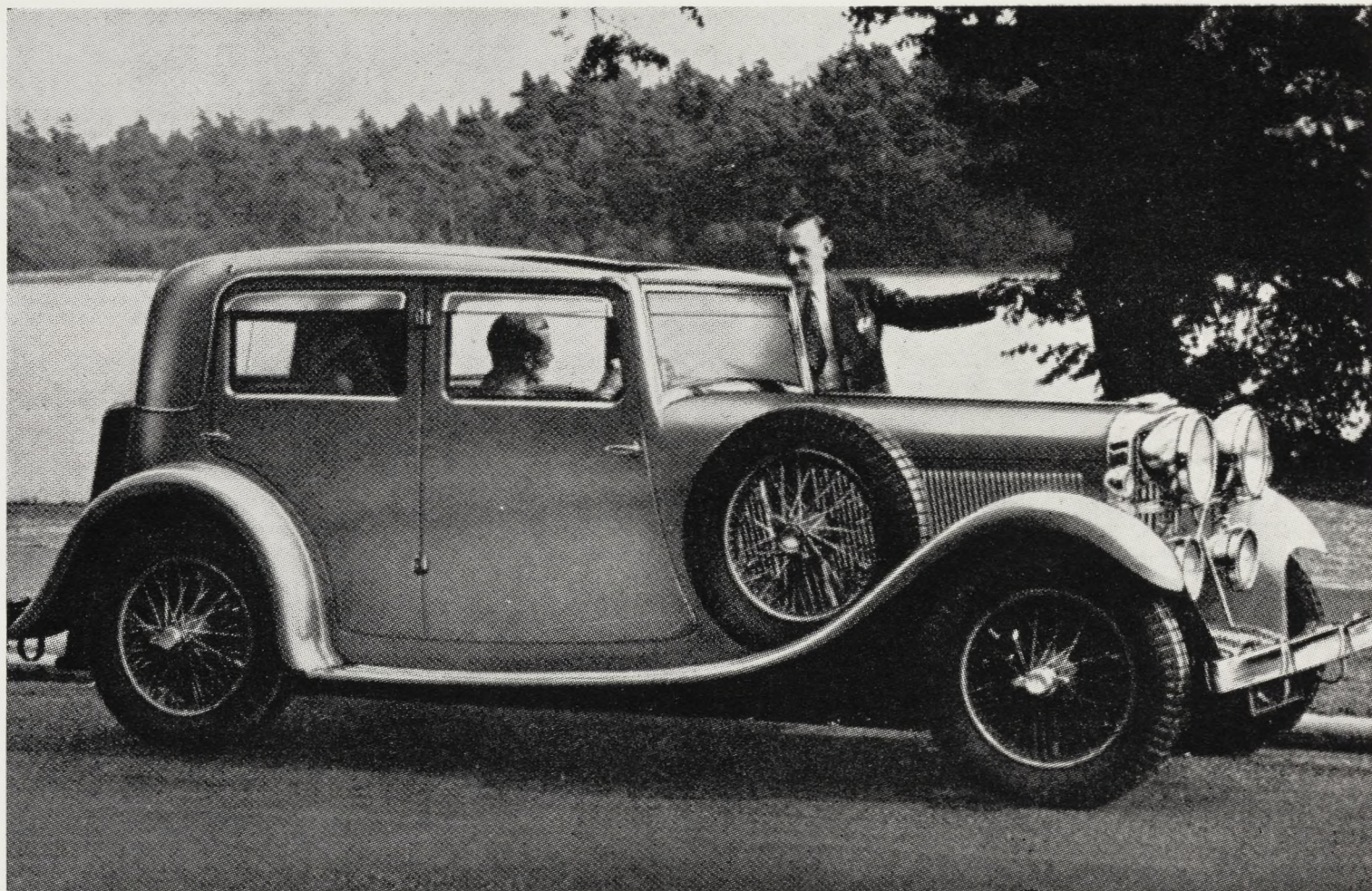
The Superb M45

The 1934 Lagonda M45 will always be, in my eyes, one of the world's really great motor cars. When it was introduced it out performed all other British sports saloons in production. 22.2 seconds to achieve 70 m.p.h. from rest was over five seconds quicker than its contemporary Rolls-Royce-produced Bentley, although for the road testers the 3½-litre Bentley obliged with a maximum speed of 1 m.p.h. faster!

Only one pre-war British sports saloon (excluding the V12 Lagonda) equalled its performance figures. That was the 4.3-litre Alvis of 1938 a much thirstier car that was, according to its road testers, half a second slower, 0-50; half a second faster, 0-60 and $\frac{1}{5}$ of a second faster, 0-70, the maximum speeds were the same, while the Lagonda's brakes were slightly better. These differences are so slight that if the figures had been taken on different days they might well have been reversed.

It is interesting to note that none of the subsequent 6-cylinder Lagondas up to 1953 had such good acceleration to 70, or bettered its fuel consumption of 17 m.p.g.

So many M45 saloons (even in the Lagonda Club) still exist in rather dilapidated states that I implore you to remove from your minds any



Talbot 105 Sports Saloon.

Photo: Courtesy of Rootes Group Ltd.

impressions that may have been gained from them. The standard pillarless saloon, was built on the "silent travel" system. Even today, thirty years after it was first produced, a well preserved example remains free from rattles and draughts, the, by modern standards, small, doors shut with a pleasant click, the body is silent and without creaks and groans. The pneumatic upholstery is very comfortable, and the driving position excellent. Suspension is firm but less hard than on the Talbots or the Alvis, and not more so than on the Rolls-Royce Bentleys. The steering is delightful, dead accurate and in spite of being high geared, no heavier than any of the other cars mentioned in this review. The vacuum-servo brakes are first class, demanding comparatively moderate pedal pressures, and have given so little trouble that it is hard to understand why they were superseded. A braking figure of 32 feet at 30 m.p.h. for a $35\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. vehicle speaks for itself.

The M45 is quiet up to 70 m.p.h. at which speed it will cruise all day quite effortlessly. In a hurry, cruising at 75 is equally acceptable, but at that speed the beginning of a "power roar"

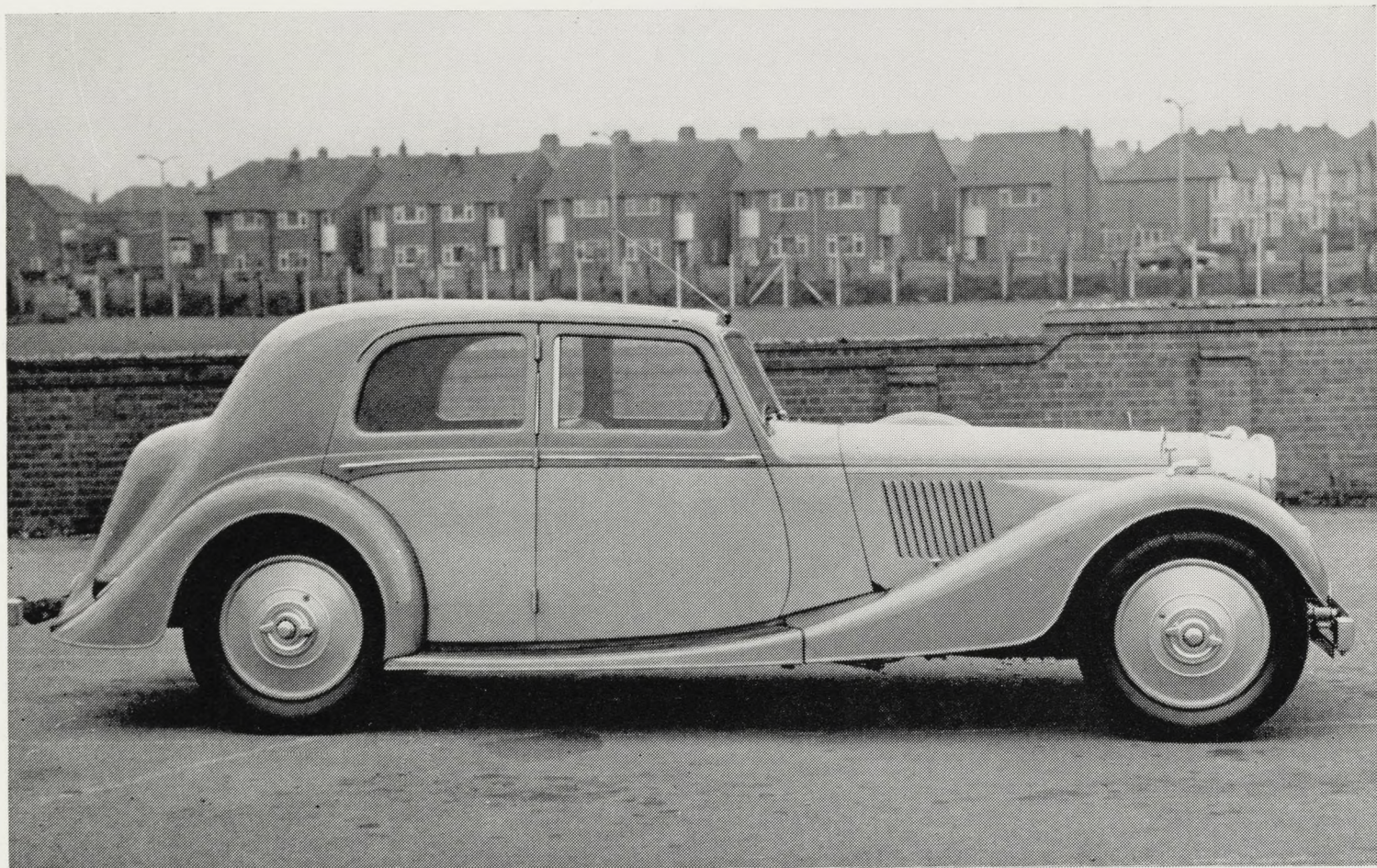
starts to be heard on all the examples I have driven. At 80 m.p.h. one becomes aware that one is travelling fast, whereas on the LG45 and LG6 models (more especially the LG6), you genuinely do not know that you are doing 80 unless you look at the speedometer. From 85-90 the engine and exhaust noise make one realise that the car is practically flat out. The road testers gave 90 m.p.h. as the mean top speed for this model and a "best" of just under 94 was obtained in one direction.

The M45 Saloon always feels "all one piece", the engine in standard tune is virtually unbreakable, and one is always aware of the massive construction of the chassis and the feeling of confidence and safety which it imparts. In my opinion it is a somewhat "handier" car than the Lagonda models which superseded it.

The Rolls Bentley

The next make that must be mentioned is Bentley. Under Rolls Royce ownership, the $3\frac{1}{2}$ -litre came out in 1934 and caused something of a stir.

A number of people have spent a great deal of



Alvis Sports Saloon.

Photo: Courtesy of Alvis Co. Ltd.

money restoring these cars to their original performance. No one whom I have spoken to has achieved this for less than £300 on the mechanical side alone, usually a far higher figure has been involved. Yet none of them ever regretted having taken the plunge.

It is a car which exercises a powerful fascination over its small band of devotees, much more so than, in my opinion, the decidedly superior 4½-litre model of same make. Yet, after all, there are still a few people who drive about in blown 2-litre Lagondas that now require stripping every 5,000 miles and use more petrol than the 4½-litre. There is no accounting for tastes!

The 3½-litre Bentley is a finely made machine some 5½ cwt. lighter than the M45. On figures alone, it has a decidedly inferior performance to the Lagonda of the same year. It takes over 4½ seconds longer to reach 60 m.p.h. and is more than 5 seconds slower in reaching 70 m.p.h. The petrol consumption of both cars is the same 17 m.p.g., while on test the Bentley showed a top speed one mile an hour faster, reaching a mean speed of 91.

This car was sold as the "Silent Sports Car". It is certainly very quiet, outstandingly so for

1934. From 50 m.p.h. upwards it is noticeably more silent than the M45; from 65 it is quieter than the LG45 Lagonda of 1936, but it is probably not more silent than the LG6 of 1938. Certainly the two excellent examples I have driven, a James Young drophead, and a Wm. Arnold Saloon, were slightly noisier than the one LG6 I knew.

Nevertheless, the 3½-litre Bentley is a car which could be driven right up to its high top speed without one being aware that the engine was working hard. Perhaps for that very reason many of them have been so driven for prolonged periods with the result that an outwardly respectable 3½-litre is nearly always much more tired mechanically than an equally presentable 4½-litre Lagonda of the same age.

The Bentley is most perfectly balanced and controllable, it can be hurled about with quite a degree more abandon than would be safe with any pre-war Lagonda saloon. The brakes always come in for an eulogy which I don't understand, they are very good (31 feet at 30 m.p.h.) and react to lightish pedal pressures, but they are not so utterly superior to the brakes on other makes under discussion, as one would imagine from

reading the majority of professional critics.

In short, the 3½-litre Bentley is an extremely effortless and refined sports saloon, unlike the Lagonda, a too persistent thoughtlessly heavy foot can damage the motor, which will exceed its maximum safe revs in all gears much more readily than would *Mr. Meadows modified marine engine*, as frequently I have heard the Lagonda unit described.

The performance figures for the Bentley were superior only to the Talbot 105 (a car costing £795 against the Bentley's £1,450), the Alvis Speed 25, and the 42 cwt. Siddeley Special; of course all the cars discussed had outstanding performances for their time, when many respectable saloons would not comfortably exceed 50 m.p.h. None the less, you could then buy a quality sports saloon with substantially better all round performance figures for £500 less than the Bentley. Figures however, do not tell the whole story. They do not describe the difference between a two hundred mile journey in a Bentley and the same journey covered for example, in a Talbot 110, which would certainly reach 60 some 6½ seconds the quicker. I drove the whole way in the Bentley and at the end stopped not at all tired. In the 110 I handed over to the owner after four hours and a cup of tea, and at the end of the same journey was quite fagged. In both cases traffic conditions on the A5 did not allow a high average to be achieved, though longish bursts of 80 were held on both occasions. This comparison is not an isolated experience. The Bentley is an effortless car to drive because it is quiet at speeds, all the controls operate sweetly, and no sense of machinery working hard is conveyed to the driver, not even when the foot is down as far as it will go.

Unjustified Thirst

My experience of the Siddeley Special was much more brief than of any of the others, and the shine had somewhat worn off the car I got to know. This very large vehicle exerted a charm which demanded notice. Produced in 1934 and sold for £965; of 5-litre capacity and 11 foot wheelbase, it weighed 2 tons, 2 cwt. Among its novel features was a servo-assisted clutch and preselector gear box.

At 13 m.p.g. it was expensive to run and this thirst was not justified by a really shattering performance. A maximum of 87 and 20.8 seconds to reach 60 were slightly inferior to the

3½-litre Bentley and the Alvis Speed 25, but compared with the touring cars of its day, it had a good performance.

The Siddeley Special ran quietly into the seventies and gave the impression of better acceleration than the figures proved. Third gear gave you a real kick in the back almost from walking pace. It always felt a very big car and did not invite carefree abandon on roundabouts or corners. It is difficult to see at what market the car was aimed, unless its producers thought they had something which would do the job of the Rolls Royce Phantom 11 Continental at half the price. It is enough to say that, though the Continental Phantom 11 Rolls was not the most silent nor the smoothest product of the marque, the Siddeley Special came no where near it.

LG45 Best 1936 Performer

1936 produced a crop of very fine cars, the Lagonda LG45; the Talbot 110 (an earlier 3½-litre one of that make had also appeared) the Alvis Speed 25 and the first of the 4½-litre Bentleys.

The LG45 was a more refined effort than its predecessor, but it was ½ cwt. heavier. Except on the first few cars a modified cylinder head produced more power higher up, modified suspension gave a much more comfortable ride, and redesigned coachwork improved its appearance in contemporary eyes, though the frontal area was decidedly increased! Nevertheless on test the LG45 gave a mean maximum of 93 m.p.h. with a best one way of nearly 97. Both those figures were the best of the all-British Sports Saloons produced during the thirties with the exception only of the V12 Lagonda. Acceleration figures to 70, were slightly inferior to the M45 of 1934.

This model was a quieter car than its predecessor, a characteristic specially noticeable at, and above, 70 m.p.h. At these speeds the motor seems much more willing to rev. The LG45 will certainly push the needle over 90 much more readily than the M45, and with far less impression of effort. There is still noticeable acceleration in between 80 and 90, while the earlier car always gradually worked up its speed in this region, requiring a long run to achieve its maximum. Although the Girling brakes give remarkable stopping power, 29 feet at 30 m.p.h., the LG45 does not feel as handy as the older model. The softer suspension contributes somewhat to that impression, not that the road holding and steering are anything but first class, for main road high

speed cruising the LG45 is a distinct step forward in comfort and silence.

The Talbot 110 was a 3½-litre car, and for a vehicle weighing 35 cwt. its performance was excellent. Up to 70 it was as quick as the Lagonda LG45 and quicker still lower down. The top speed of the 1936 Saloon, according to the *Autocar*, was 89. This will cause raised eyebrows among 110 owners, but there it is!

I have always found the 110 less smooth and effortless than the other cars mentioned, it seems to get noisy over 70, and as it approaches its maximum, one is aware of powerful machinery thrashing round under the bonnet. It always surprises me that this car weighs 35 cwt. for in spite of being 5½ cwt. heavier than the 3½-litre Bentley, it is very much quicker off the mark and accelerates better right up to its maximum. This Talbot engine will easily reach 5,000 r.p.m. and it does not seem to hurt it. You cannot get this on the standard saloon in top gear, which is perhaps why these engines are so long lived.

At £825 it was excellent value, having better performance figures all round than any contemporary British sports saloon of 3½-litres, except for the maximum speed reported, which was a mile or two per hour slower than the Bentley and Alvis. I do believe however, that the majority of examples would have exceeded the road test figures by enough to have put it into the nineties.

I have only driven one example of this model in really good condition. While I admired what it would do when asked, I must confess that coming to it immediately after the 3½-litre Bentley, I have the impression that it was appreciably more tiring to drive than the other cars of similar performance.

Superior Handling of Alvis

The Alvis Speed 25 is another one of my favourites. During one brief ownership of a Charlesworth Saloon, I grew to admire it greatly, in spite of its flexible chassis and incredibly stiff independant front suspension, completing the job of wrecking the body which rattled like an old van at anything over 50.

The huge transverse spring for the front end and the "ride controlled" Luvax-damped behind, gave a ride reminiscent of a sledge being drawn over cobbles if the road surface was anything but smooth. However, you certainly slide this big saloon round corners with the car under perfect control and completely responsive to the wheel

and accelerator. It really clung to the ground without the slightest suggestion of roll.

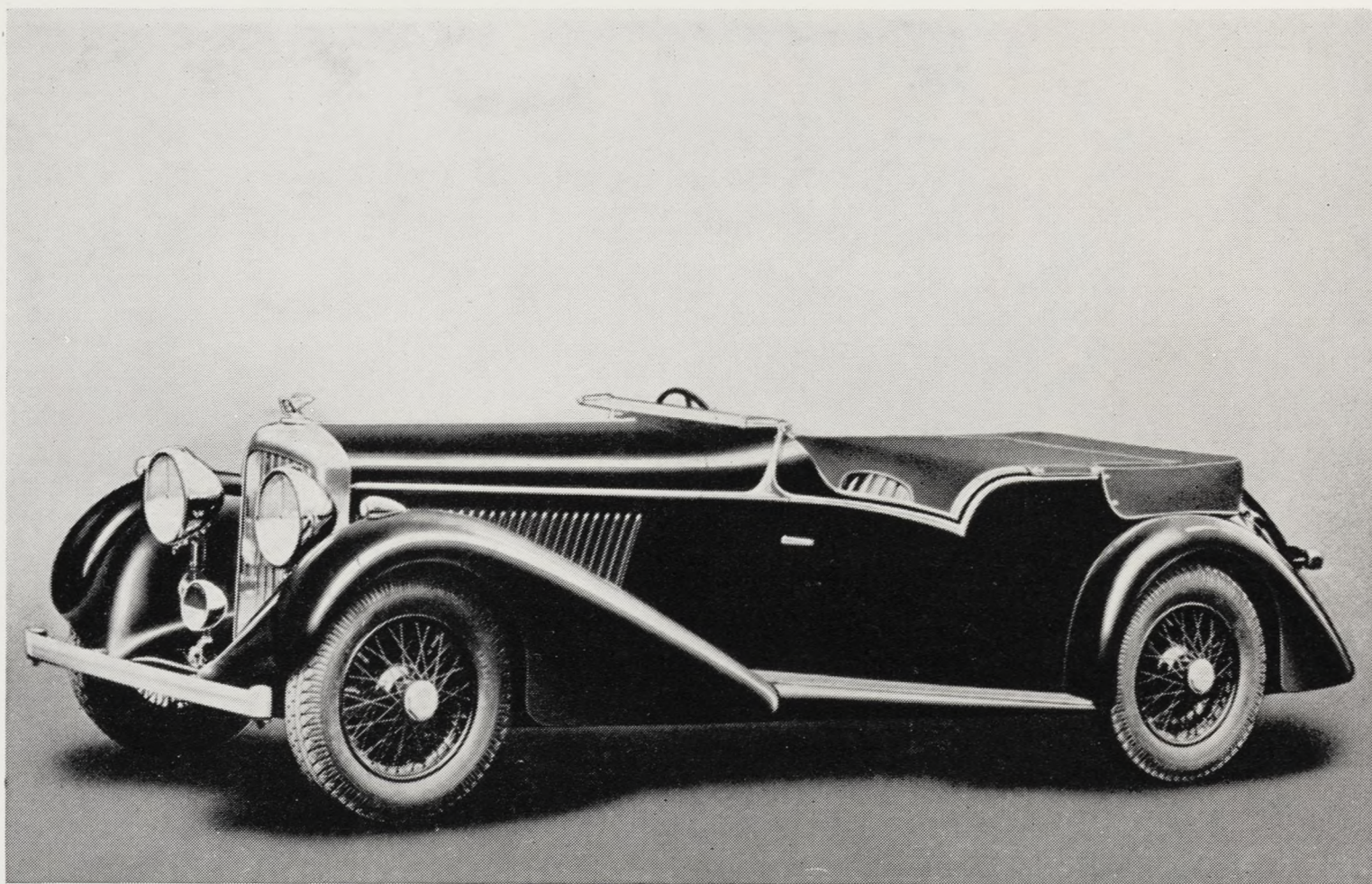
Its road holding and handling were undoubtedly superior to all the Lagondas, mainly because it was slightly shorter and of much lower build. Its performance figures were, of course, not in the same street as any of the 4½-litre Lagonda models, but I must mention the wonderful rush forward when one puts ones foot down in 3rd engaged at say, 25 m.p.h. it swept you up to over 60 with the seat pressing hard against your back.

When writing about this car's road performance, I am basing my remarks not on my own vehicle, because although this would certainly "go", the bodywork was too noisy for a fair assessment of the model. An acquaintance of mine had a Speed 25 with, I think, Van den Plas, two door coachwork (anyway, not the standard saloon) which had been completely removed from the chassis, rebuilt and remounted. I drove this car several times, and it must have been in virtually new condition. Like mine, the exhaust note was deep and quite noticeable, and though not a creak came out of the body there was a tendency for it to drum slightly at speed. Strangely enough, I did not notice this on the even noisier 4.3-litre Alvis.

Apart from the exhaust the Speed 25 was not a noisy motor, and the beautifully balanced seven bearing engine ran comfortably up to the red mark on the rev. counter without a tremor. One never had the feeling that it was about to burst. I always thought it such a pity the car was not some 15 cwt. lighter, for then it would have been a real flyer. As it was 35½ cwt. it was as heavy as the old M45, and even when you rowed it along with the gear lever, it could not hold its own with that slightly less expensive, older, and more silent car.

The 4¼-litre Bentley was introduced in 1936. The model with which I am familiar, was a Park Ward 1937 Saloon. I was able to see the road test figures for both this and the 1936 model, and it is worth noting that the 1936 car was slightly lighter and had slightly better acceleration!

Whatever the 3½-litre enthusiasts say, the bigger engined version had a better performance all round in spite of the 4¼ cwt. extra weight. In my opinion, it gives a more comfortable ride while its cornering and general handling are equally good. The 4¼-litre tested by the motoring press had the same top speed as its smaller brother, 91 m.p.h., but its acceleration throughout was



Bentley 4 1/4 litre Van Den Plas.

Photo: Courtesy of Rolls-Royce Ltd.

more than 3 seconds faster from 0-60 and 0-70. It is even more silent and effortless than the 3 1/2 and when both are driven hard, they have the same petrol consumption.

Hard Ride of 4 1/4 Bentley

Like most of the sports cars of this period, the ride is decidedly firm. The steering column adjustment for the rear dampers is labelled from "soft" to "hard". Few owners will not agree that "hard" to "very hard" is nearer the truth.

As compared with the 1936 Lagonda LG45, its performance figures show no worthwhile difference, but there is no doubt that it is more effortless to drive, and appreciably quieter over 60 m.p.h. I think it fair to say that this is one of the two finest British Sports Saloons built prior to 1939. The vehicle that runs it neck to neck is the LG6 Lagonda, though of the two, the Bentley is undoubtedly the handier. I should mention here, that I have not driven the overdrive version of the 4 1/4 Bentley, nor have I had more than a few miles behind the wheel of a V12 Lagonda, both these latter cars are virtually 1939 models.

The 1938 Alvis 4.3-litre had a really excep-

tional performance. The open model incidentally very considerably out-performed the saloon. The road test figures were the best of all as far as acceleration is concerned, the maximum speed was slightly less than the LG45 and LG6. In justice to the old M45 Lagonda, I should mention that the Alvis achieved this distinction by merest fractions of a second: half a second faster to 60 and one fifth of a second to 70, while from 0-50 it was half a second slower. The figures still remain outstanding, even today few saloon cars can reach 60 m.p.h. from rest in 15.3 seconds, especially when built on the luxury lines of the 34 cwt. Alvis.

The road holding of the 4.3-litre was superb, every bit as good as the Speed 25. Cornering was a delight, the car remaining under perfect control of wheel and throttle even in a deliberately provoked slide. The low centre of gravity and stiff suspension gave no roll at all. However, the ride was hard and the flexing of the chassis could be noticed in spite of the frame's massive dimensions, not that the road holding was in the slightest affected by it. For comfort it could not be compared with the LG6 Lagonda of the same

year. It could, however, out accelerate the LG6 by about one second right up the scale until 90 m.p.h.

Driving the 4.3-litre one has the impression of a real "goer", the all synchro box is really wonderful and even in top gear it gives one a push in the back when the throttle is depressed. The engine seems a little rougher than the Speed 25 and the twin exhausts are quite audible both inside and outside the vehicle. For a really high performance luxury car, I think it is a little too noisy, as it starts to roar at about seventy and from that speed upwards, sitting fairly close to the ground you know that you are travelling fast.

On sheer performance and road holding, it is probably the best of the bunch, but desirable and exhilarating as it is, it would not be very choice for say, a 250 mile journey in England, or 400-500 miles on the Continent.

The Outstanding LG6 of 1938

The last on the list is the Lagonda LG6 of 1938. This was a superb piece of work. If only it had been, say, 4 cwt. lighter it then, without question, would have been the best of all the cars named hitherto, and still it would have been no heavier than its 1934 predecessor. As it is, it shares pride of place with the 4½ Bentley. Only the old M45 and the 4.3-litre Alvis give better acceleration figures, while its top speed is slightly higher than either.

The ride is outstandingly good for a pre-war car, being much better than the 4½-litre Bentley. The independent front suspension really worked on this model far better than on the V12 (perhaps the engine was lighter, and certainly the weight distribution was different). The road holding was excellent, steering and cornering very good indeed. It would, however, be inaccurate to suggest that it could be thrown about like the Alvis or the Bentley. Probably its 38½ cwt. was the reason.

It is true to say that the LG6 was decidedly the most comfortable of the cars that have been reviewed. Inside it was nearly silent up to 75, remained quiet in the 80's and right on up to its maximum speed. The Girling brakes were extremely effective, and the car inspired confidence at all speeds. One always imagined one was not travelling as fast as the speedometer told one was the case.

Many people consider that the Sports Saloon on the "short" (10 ft. 7 ins.) chassis was the most

handsome of all the sports saloons of the thirties.

For long distance motoring at high speed it is difficult to think of any equal to the LG6 even today. The 4½ Bentley is as silent; perhaps, when both cars are approaching their maximum, even more so. The LG6 gives a much better ride especially if the road surfaces are at all poor. The Bentley is handier and the controls somewhat lighter, but its acceleration is not quite so good. It is really too difficult to say which one likes the better, especially as one's personal bias peeps through every line that has been written.

In conclusion, I must make it clear that I have not had the pleasure of driving any of the cars brand new, but I have only written about those which I believe were worthy examples of their marque. The figures mentioned, in nearly every instance, come from *Autocar* or *Motor* tests, and although people may disagree with them, they should have the merit of being all "equally wrong", and therefore still provide a good basis for comparing those points that can be compared by reference to stop watches, weighbridges, and such other instruments that Testers use.

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PERFORMANCE FIGURES FOR CARS REVIEWED

CAR	PRICE £	YEAR	WEIGHT cwt.	ACCELERATION			TOP SPEED	FUEL M.P.G.
				0-50	0-60	0-70		
ALVIS Speed 25 ...	1,270	1936	35½	14.2	20.8	28.2	90	17
ALVIS 4.3-litre ...	995	1938	34	10.9	15.3	22	90	15
BENTLEY 3½ ...	1,450	1934	30	13.4	20.4	27.6	91	17
BENTLEY 4¼ ...	1,510	1937	34¼	12.7	17.1	24.2	91	17
LAGONDA M45 ...	950	1934	35¼	10.4	15.8	22.2	90	17
LAGONDA LG45 ...	1,000	1936	35¾	12.4	17.2	24	93	16
LAGONDA LG6 ...	1,195	1938	38½	11.3	16.4	23	91	14
TALBOT 105 ...	795	1933	35	14.6	19.4	29.6	88	16
TALBOT 110 ...	825	1936	35½	11.8	16.8	24	89	15
SIDDELEY SPECIAL	965	1934	42	14	20.8	30.4	87	13

FOR COMPARISON—A POST-WAR SPORTS SALOON

LAGONDA 2.6-litre	2,198	1949	29	12.9	17.6	24.9	90	17
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Bill Hartop and his family are moving to Switzerland for approximately two years. Their address will be:

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1967 A.G.M.

A last reminder—

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LAGONDAS VARIOUS

BY ELLIOT ELDER

IN MARCH 1954, I HAD NEVER HEARD OF A LAGONDA, and bought my first one, the Rapier saloon BLA6, quite by chance—it was the cheapest car I could find! Since then I have owned sixteen, ten of them Rapiers and the remainder ranging from 3-litre to V-12, and have driven them over 200,000 miles—mostly highly enjoyable—and have remained faithful to the marque, except for a year with an Alvis 4.3 drophead.

Approximately half of this mileage has been covered in Rapiers, those being the aforementioned four-door saloon (21 cwt!), a fixed-head coupé, two dropheads (one modified), two tourers (one modified), and four specials, two of which were constructed here. The big Lagondas comprise one 3-litre—the 1929 team car, one 3½-litre Carlton drophead, one 3½/M45 Special—also built here, two LG45 saloons, one a most unusual Sanction I, much modified, the other a standard S IV, and a 1939 V-12 drophead.

To describe all these would occupy far too much time and space, so I'll confine myself to the present fleet of five—two Rapiers, 3-litre, LG45 and V-12, but as all the cars have been used at some time for the same daily 46 mile journey, I've had ample opportunity to assess the relative usefulness of the various models, and their good and bad points, so I will also attempt a sort of "Lagonda Which"—it may be of interest, or even of use, to anyone thinking of acquiring a particular model, or changing from one to another.

Of my two Rapiers, GBL780, the two-seater, was built in 1950, from unused parts, in the Emeryson Works, to the order of one Dobbs (I believe he drove Rileys at Brooklands) and is said to have cost him over £1,000. The chassis is largely standard, but the driving position with steering box, bulkhead, etc., has been moved back nine inches, and the radiator shell fits in front of the lowered core, resulting in a bonnet rather longer than the LG45 (but also excellent access to the engine, and very adequate cooling). The bodywork is of heavy gauge alloy on an angle-iron frame, four inches lower than the standard tourer, with a sheet alloy floor attached direct to the chassis, requiring a transmission tunnel between the seats. The springs are rather

softer than normal, and the shock-absorbers are modern telescopics—certainly the most comfortable Rapier that I have driven, with excellent roadholding. Though weighing over 17 cwt. it has a top speed of 90 m.p.h., with a consumption of 33 m.p.g. Since I bought it in 1960, it has covered 30,000 miles, requiring one fibre gear (now bronze), one oil-pump drive gear, and a magneto. The bores, pistons and entire bottom end have run untouched for 60,000 miles, and the engine has also been used for racing, without protest.

BLT391, which is raced frequently at V.S.C.C. events, driven by Jon Abson, was originally a Maltby drophead. It was stripped in 1950 for use as a trials car (the engine raised four inches on special brackets), but never completed, and lay disused until 1961, when Ron Siggins found it—like most of the other Lagondas in this area—and restored it to standard, and immaculate condition.

I bought it intending to build a light 2-seater road-car, but it seemed a pity to cover up such an attractive chassis, so Jon and I decided to build a racing Rapier, designed to fit him exactly, and incorporating all the best modifications which we had tried on previous cars, plus some new ones derived from much study of textbooks and details of other sports and racing engines.

The Rapier handles so superbly in standard form that it seemed both unnecessary and unwise to shorten the chassis, but the seat was moved back a foot to help weight distribution, and bolted direct to the chassis—after which Jon sat in it, and all the controls were positioned to suit. The scuttle section was based on a curved angle-iron frame, both dashboard and body panel being stressed members, to provide a completely rigid support for the steering column, while the rest of the body is separate and removable, alloy on a strip-steel frame, very light but surprisingly strong. The road springs were thinned and flattened, the rear shackles reversed, and telescopics (Mini) fitted all round—a great improvement, and considerably lighter than the originals. (The complete car weighs under 14 cwt.)

The engine had 160-thou. machined from head and block, giving a c.r. of over 10/1, and allowing a 65 link bottom chain with no need for a tensioner. A bronze gear was fitted instead of the fibre one, and much re-shaping and polishing done on ports and combustion chambers to suit the 1½" SU's on "Barker" manifolds and four-



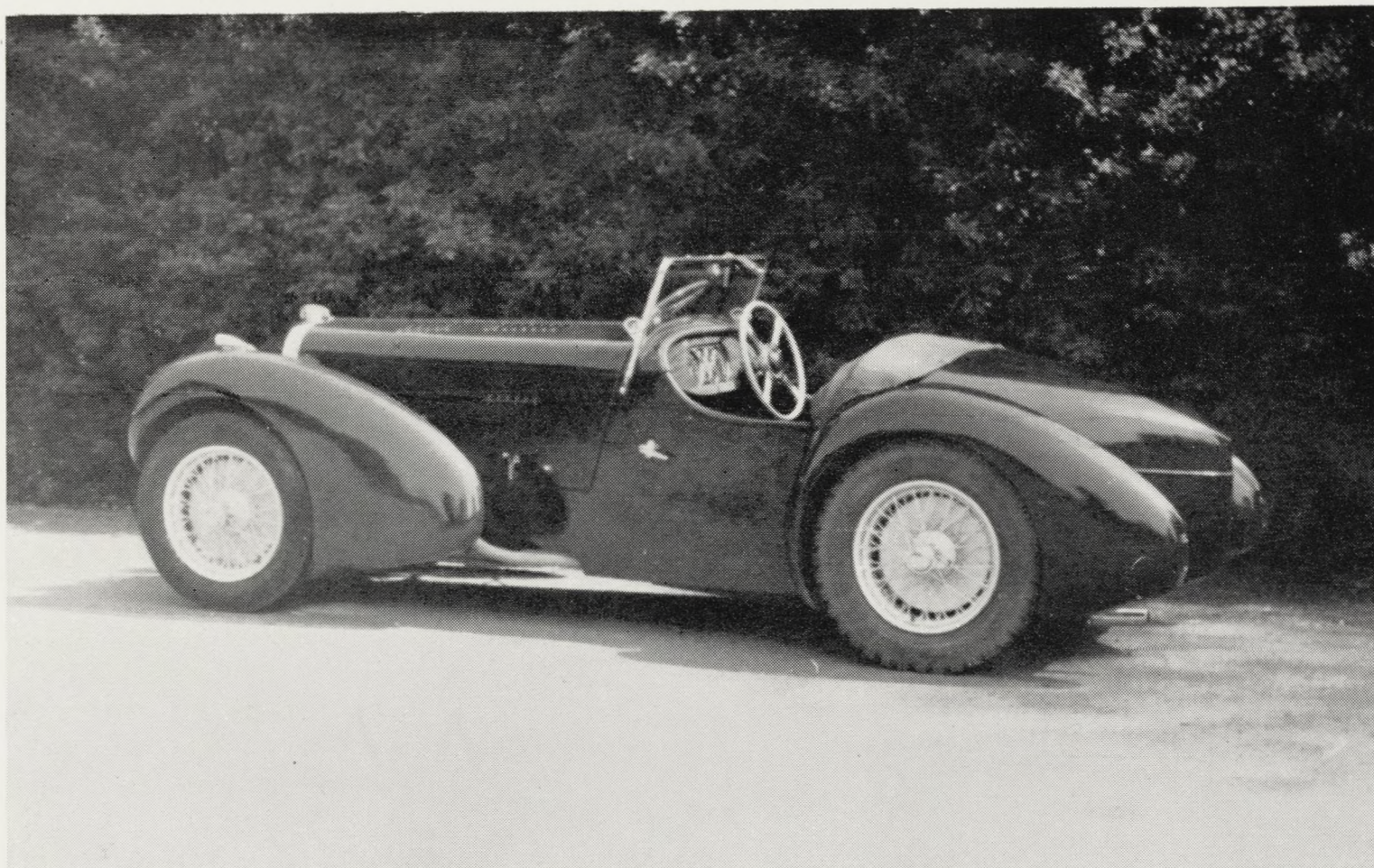
Elliot Elder's first Rapier.

branch exhaust. The broadest available cams were used (Rapier camshafts vary considerably), timed to give 32 degrees of overlap. The rear water elbows were removed, and new transfer ports drilled opposite the originals to equalise cylinder temperatures—one of the main faults of the Rapier engine.

The car came second in its first two races, though Jon had never driven it before, but I had failed to notice a hair-crack in one cylinder, resulting in a seized piston and broken con-rod and block on its third outing. The well-used bottom end of GBL's engine was borrowed as a temporary measure and in this form it won a scratch race at Silverstone with best lap of 1.24.6. In the meantime I had bought the partly built 1½-litre Rapier engine, developed in 1957 by Pat Black of Vandervell's, intended for the G.P. formula, but never finished—I completed it, using modified Skoda pistons and Jaguar XK con-rods (lucky that they based their design so closely on the Rapier!). This gives 11¼/1 c.r. with almost flat-topped pistons, and we used two exhaust camshafts with oversize inlet valves and ports, and a dual two-into-one exhaust system.

Racing with this engine has produced all sorts of problems—Black would not have got far in a Grand Prix—mostly in parts specially made or modified by very reputable firms and individuals, but it has also performed well—Jon came second at Silverstone and Castle Combe and took the Vintage and PVT record at Inghelton from the fierce ex-MacDonald Bentley by more than two seconds, managing 1.21.6 at Silverstone, 2.16.3 at Oulton, and a top speed of 106 m.p.h. at Castle Combe. It is also a highly exciting road car, with remarkable power at low speeds, giving acceleration which even a lightweight, tuned 4½-litre can't approach, though the top speed is limited at present by the 5/1 axle ratio—we hope to try a 4/1 next season.

The 3-litre, KW7217, at present comfortably installed (with Robin Brownlee's fine 2-litre) in the local motor museum, has already appeared in the magazine, so I will only mention that it continues to give highly reliable and enjoyable service when required, and has at last been fitted with a set of replica team-car wings, and has been properly coach-painted—a great improvement. I have even found some brakes, though these are



Rapier Special, GBL 780, built in the Emeryson works.

never a strong point, and the drums are incredibly worn.

The LG45 saloon NTB550, my most recent acquisition, is most unusual both in appearance and history. A very early Sanction I, it has the spare wheel recessed into the one-piece boot lid, resembling the M45, the front wings having, of course, no wheel-covers—the near side has just a contoured lid covering the tools and jacking system box. The interior woodwork is the black Japanned finish, and the dashboard identical to the early LG45 tourer.

It was purchased from Lagondas by Gardner Ltd., and used solely by Hugh Gardner to demonstrate their 6LK engine (diesel); the petrol engine, with only running-in mileage, was preserved, and more recently, I believe, went to Henry Coates.

The G9 gearbox, not surprisingly, was not adequate for the torque of the massive diesel, so it was re-designed with stronger gears, and central change, while the radiator mounting was moved forward, so that it now slopes, and the bulkhead recessed to accommodate the 6LK engine—much longer than the Meadows 4½. They also fitted an electric screenwasher, using an SU pump, a

curious heater, and most elaborate soundproofing. There are also many detail improvements to chassis components—all most beautifully done.

The car was eventually sold to Tom Ellison, who used it, and its sister-car the Sanction III FPF145 with 4LK engines, Gardner's having fitted the originals in Jaguars. It came to me engineless again, but, apart from needing a re-spray, in fine condition—the interior almost as new, the mileage being just 55,000. I fitted a 3.4 Jaguar engine complete with gearbox and overdrive—not difficult as it had latterly had this box on the diesel, and the Jaguar engine fits neatly under the LG bonnet—most accessible too.

It has several advantages over the Meadows, apart from being cheap to buy—being much lighter, it transforms the LG steering from unpleasantly heavy to pleasantly light, achieves 23 m.p.g. without difficulty, is both quieter and smoother than the Meadows, and with an extra 70 b.h.p., provides very high performance. It also seems to be very reliable and long-lasting (unlike Jaguar bodywork!). The gearbox, of similar vintage to the G10, is no better, but has a much pleasanter, shorter lever. The overdrive is excellent especially on motorways. I have so

far driven it 3,000 miles—a most satisfactory vehicle for everyday use.

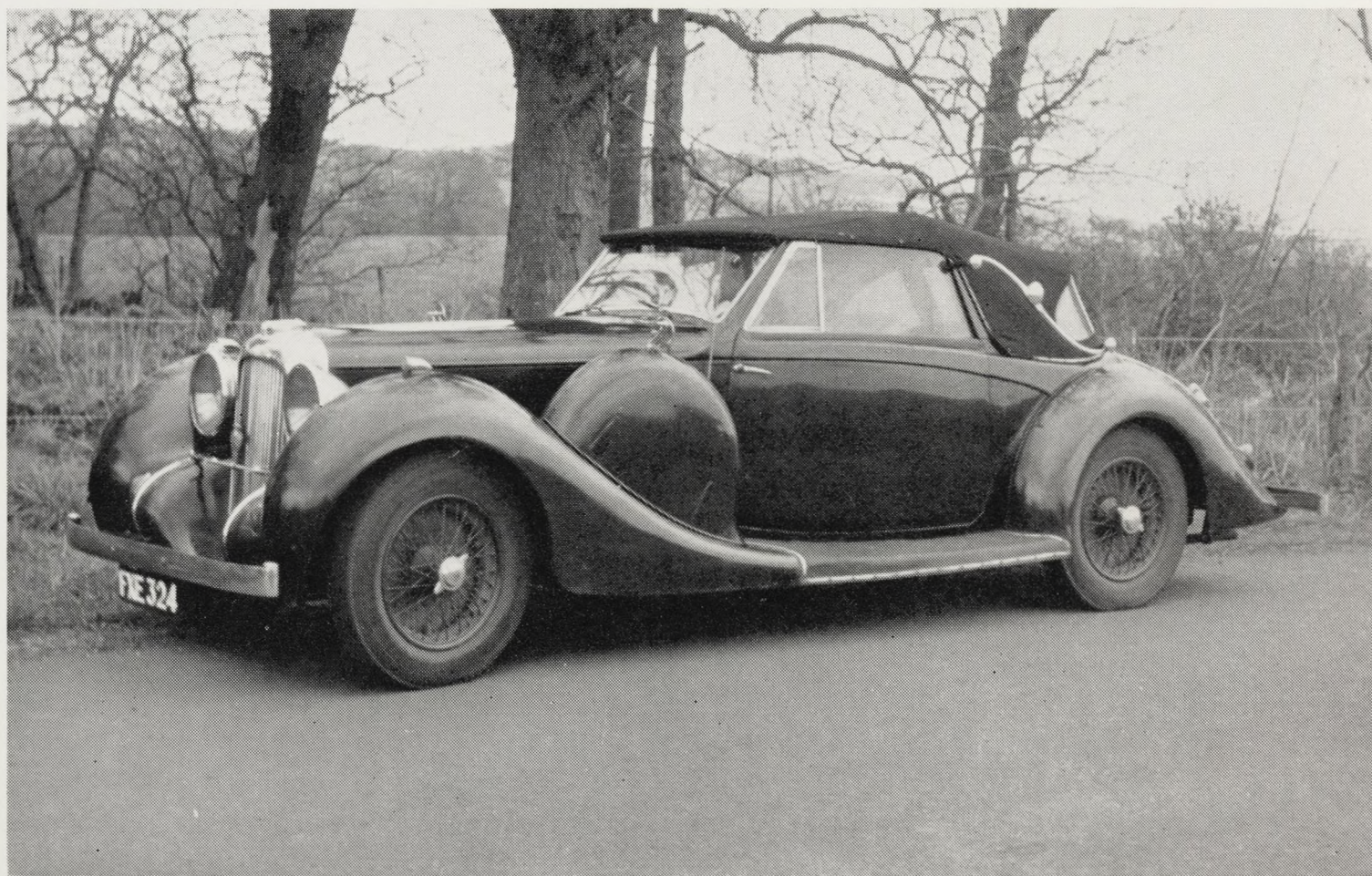
The V-12, FXE324, is a 1939 drophead coupé, which I bought in 1964 from a bookmaker in Glasgow, who had apparently got it some years before for two gold watches and a ring! He had spent a large sum on new tyres, a respray, new hood and complete retrim, and the asking price when Ron Siggins first told me about it, was £750. I waited three years however, while the owner got more and more keen to sell, and the price came down to £240, at which point, having tried it, I couldn't resist it any longer. The bookie, in debt, promptly vanished with the cash, and David Lees and I subsequently spent several hours trying to start it before finding the hidden switch for the electric choke, draining all the batteries in the new cars in the showrooms where it was garaged, in the process.

All this was too much for the starter, which failed on the way home, and we had to push-start it across a busy road, after dark, in a snowstorm—not a pleasant experience (nor a good omen)!

After repairing a large leak in the 40-gallon fuel tank (yes, 40) improving the m.p.g. from 12 to 16, and another in the brake master cylinder,

it provided splendid daily transport and proved itself an ideal tow-car—the racing car and trailer, weighing nearly a ton, making little difference to performance, handling or fuel consumption. Ten thousand miles later however, disaster struck when one of the bolts holding the crankshaft balance weights sheared, and on its way out smashed or bent everything in range, including the main oil gallery and suction pipe, and the bottoms of three pistons and cylinders. Surprisingly, the engine continued to run as well as ever, but of course without oil pressure.

Luckily another engine was available locally in a crashed V-12, a 1940 Series III, which I bought for £20, and which we extracted with a ten-ton mobile crane, and inserted in my car with an hydraulic hoist—a much better method. It worked, but required an overhaul, so was sent to Southern Cylinder Grinding Co. of Glasgow, whose managing director had owned this particular engine for some years before the car was crashed, to be completely rebuilt, at vast expense. About ten thousand miles later, and a year to the day after the original trouble, the crank began to vibrate most horribly as all the metal had peeled off the main bearing shells, though the big-ends,



The V12 Lagonda, FXE 324.

converted to standard V.P. Dodge shells, were undamaged, as was the newly hardened crankshaft. The engine was repaired under guarantee, the bearing problem being cured, it was said, by copper-plating the steel shells to promote adhesion.

Exactly a year, and a similar mileage later however, the identical symptoms returned, for the same reason, as the shells had not been plated at all, and the metal had fallen off as before—though why it should come off no one seems to know. It is now being rebuilt in a local garage, whose owner has a pair of immaculate V-12 long-chassis limousines, where I can supervise the work myself—the shells will be plated this time!

In spite of all this I still consider the V-12 to be the finest pre-war Lagonda, and use it daily when in working order. The performance, flexibility, brakes, suspension, handling, and comfort, all deserve the highest praise, but accessibility and maintenance (except for the excellent chassis system) are quite another matter, and anyone buying one should have plenty of spare cash, time, space, heavy lifting gear, and endless patience!

LAGONDA 'WHICH'

Models Tested.—Rapiers (10), 3-litre, 3½-litre, M45 Special, LG45 SI/XK, LG45 S.IV, V-12 DHC (1 each). All used over the same route, under all conditions (50/50 main road/town traffic). "Mixture" grade petrol.

Fuel Consumption.—Best, Rapiers 30-40 m.p.g. depending on weight and tune. Average, standard, 34.

3-litre, 23 m.p.g.; LG45/XK, 23; 3½-litre, 21; M45 Sp., 21; LG45 S.IV, 19; V-12, 15-16. (Alvis 4.3, 16.)

Brakes.—Best, V-12 (servo) excellent; Rapiers very good; 3½/M45 good; LG45's fair (heavy pedal pressure); 3-litre just adequate, but handy single adjuster and good handbrake. (4.3 Alvis (servo) poor.)

Handling.—Best, Rapiers, outstanding; V-12 very good indeed. All the others quite good. (Alvis 4.3 poor.)

Suspension.—Best, V-12 (and Alvis 4.3) excellent. The rest all fairly good, but Rapiers hard, especially light versions.

Acceleration.—Best, Rapier Sp. 1½-litre. Of the rest: best, V-12 (and Alvis 4.3) and M45 Sp., followed by Rapier specials and LG45/XK (poor engine), LG45 S.IV, standard Rapiers (tourers), 3-litre Sp., 3½-litre, and heavy 3-litre and Rapier saloon.

Top Speed.—V-12, (Alvis 4.3), LG45/XK, all about 115 m.p.h. Rapier 1½-litre Sp., 106; M45/Sp., LG45 S.IV, 95; 3-litre Sp., 92; Rapier tuned 2-seater, 90; 3½-litre, 82; Std. Rapier tourer, 75.

Gearboxes.—All reliable. Best, Rapier (and Alvis 4.3), excellent; V-12 and LG (G10), good, quiet with fair synchromesh; LG/Jaguar (Mk. VII), equally good; early 3-litre, good but very noisy; late 3-litre and 3½-litre, quiet but extremely poor—quite unsuited to modern traffic conditions.

Steering.—Best, Rapier, light and excellent; V-12, light and very good for its size and weight; 3- and 3½-litre, fairly light and good; LG45/Jaguar, very light and good; LG45 S.IV, very heavy and good. (Alvis 4.3, very light but poor.)

Engines.—Reliability and worst features. Best, 3-, 3½-litre, very good except for early 3-litre oil pump (low pressure) and Scintilla magneto, apparently designed to trap water! Bad oil surge. Rapiers, good, except for fibre timing gear and stretching of chains, with consequent tensioner trouble. Meadows 4½, only fair. Bored out to a most undesirable degree, resulting in poor cooling (very poor water pump) and inadequate oil supply. Insufficient room for proper liners, and bad oil surge. V-12, fair. Highly complex and inaccessible requiring much skill and some special tools—very expensive to overhaul.

Bodywork.—Construction and comfort. Best, V-12, followed by LG45 and 3½-litre, 3-litre, and Rapier. (Alvis 4.3 equals V-12.)

Conclusions.—Best buy for town, traffic and parking, competition use, economy and ease of maintenance and safety in all conditions, Rapier, preferably mildly tuned.

Best for comfort, long distance high-speed touring, irrespective of cost, V-12, but only if in excellent condition.

Best compromise for big everyday mileage, LG45/Jaguar (or even better, LG6/Jaguar). Reason—economy, comfort, reliability, availability and cheapness of spare parts.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

3-litre News

Dear Sir—Thank you for your letter and the copy of the Lagonda Magazine.

For the Mag. I enclose a few notes about my 3-litre which is in fact not a stranger to the Club as it was formerly the property of the late J. W. Grayer of Kendal.

I drove down to see the car in Edinburgh in April 1966. I knew nothing at all about the 3-litre Lagonda but knew quite a bit about the 2-litre, having helped Trevor Peerless with his rebuild at odd times as he was a near neighbour before I joined the Navy.

At first sight the car was rather a disappointment as it looked very drab, but it was just about the most original Lagonda that I had ever seen. The engine was in excellent order having had a complete rebuild by Thompson-Doxey of Southport and the chassis under all the mud seemed sound and to my relief just like the 2-litre chassis, about which I knew something.

With quite a bit of work and not too much expense I believed I could turn MV 4034 back into a very presentable car. I bought the car and started work last October.

All the chrome fittings were removed and sent to the platers and I started on the big clean up. By April the car was ready to be painted and the fittings had come back after *five* months. I had also had a folding windscreen made similar to the one Trevor had fitted to his car. New gaiters were fitted to the springs and all the steering linkages, and after a visit to the local coach-builder to have the bonnet and wings painted the car looked as a Lagonda should once again.

The car is not concours standard as the fabric on the body and all the interior trimming is the original and although it is all in excellent condition it has not got that "just left the factory look" required for a *concours* car.

The body is a four-seat tourer with twin spare wheels mounted on the bulkhead. At the rear is a boot with a fold down lid containing two fitted suitcases, and a tool kit of over thirty tools in a hardwood tool chest attached to the inside of the boot lid. The sidescreens are kept behind the rear seat squab, and a fold away screen can be fitted for the rear seat passengers.

I think that apart from the windshield and the rear lights the car is completely original, and it will provide me with many years of enjoyable motoring. I am hoping that when I get back from sea next year I will get a posting South and I will then be able to attend some of the club meetings.

MARTIN HOLLOWAY,
H.M.S. Eagle,
B.F.P.O. Ships.

Whither the Club?

Dear Sir—The Leader in the Summer edition of the club magazine prompts me to make the following observations as the future of the club.

I have long imagined that the club contains two main types of member. The first type who enjoys using his car for competitive events and the second type who enjoys restoring his car and using it for normal motoring. I presume the bulk of members, including myself, fall into the second division.

I can see no point at all in spending a large amount of time and money in restoring a car, never designed to be raced, if one is then going to enter it for an event, such as the U.S.C.C. Measham, to sustain the type of damage described by Henry Coates in his article.

My own reasons for belonging to the club are to make use of Ivan Forshaw's excellent spares service. As you suggest far more use could be made of the available funds in the manufacture of spare parts.

The club should abandon the banal "Flashlight", "Gasbulb" image and attempt to model itself on the Alvis clubs. These provide a first rate service of valuable information to their members and are even in the process of establishing a workshop and garage unit.

For my part I do not want to continue paying £2 10s. 0d. a year to receive two or three pages of "funnies" every month.

PAUL L. EDWARDS,
Blackheath, S.E.3.

Dear Sir—The recent appeal for more active support by members for organised club competitions has prompted me to put pen to paper and set out some of my own thoughts on the subject.

On reading through back numbers of the "Lagonda" magazine I am struck by the almost

complete demise of the Lagonda team cars from active competition during the last seven or eight years. In 1958-9 every issue of the magazine contained reports about the performances put up by these cars by their then enthusiastic owners but in recent years they all seem to have faded from the scene leaving the flag to be shown by one or two stalwarts in specials of their own construction which, although Lagondas, do not have the interest or prestige of the genuine cars.

Where are the team cars now and can we please see them racing again and being used in the way that they were meant to be? An example set by the owners of these cars could well stir up some latent enthusiasm amongst the more lethargic owners in the club and if we don't actually see a "Lagondas only" race at the next V.S.C.C. meeting we may at least have a few more entries for the sprint meeting or driving test type of competition which people like Herb Schofield and others go to so much trouble to organise, only to be rewarded with a pitifully small entry which in any case consists mainly of "other makes."

I don't think that anybody would seriously like to see the Lagonda Club become nothing more than a "Register" although this is and must remain a very important function of the club, and if those members who have interesting cars would bring them out on the track as they did a few years ago they might stir up the sort of enthusiasm which was a feature of the Club in its earlier days.

BRIAN J. GREEN,
Birkenhead. (G.14.)

Dear Sir—I have, with immense pleasure, read and re-read your article, "How Stands The Club" printed in the Summer Magazine, and I feel so strongly on the subject that I have put pen to paper.

Your article is the first step, of many I hope, towards the function of the Lagonda Club as it should be.

My interpretation of the reason for the Club's presence and being, is first and foremost to preserve this magnificent make of car, and the second being to provide maximum opportunities to enjoy and to share the enjoyment of owning a Lagonda.

Preservation is mocked and destroyed by the constant organisation, participation and subsequent "death or glory boys" write-ups in our magazine, and the occasional pictures and

comments in *Motor Sport* by Mr. Boddy and friends upon and about competitions.

With our spares situation greatly reduced by the passage of time, to the tune of 30 years, it is ludicrous to encourage and permit the rich and semi-rich who can afford to participate in these events, to expose these fine pieces of machinery to unnecessary stresses, strains and breakages.

This they do with gay abandon, placing as much importance to three broken crankshafts in one season, snapped this, buckled that, as they would do to a replacement dashboard bulb.

"Not to worry, old boy, Ivan has tons of spares", would be the typically expected justification of such wasted abuse.

True, Ivan has tons of spares today, but this rapid consumption will have a very short term effect of (a) reducing the spare parts available to those true enthusiasts who own and drive a Lagonda for quiet pleasure and marque preservation, and (b) creating unnecessary extra expense, large expense, in having spare parts manufactured in dribs and drabs, never in bulk for cost reduction.

I fail to see what offerings these competitions have to make to the Club, and I welcome with open arms, the day that they are removed from the activities of the Club, as they serve no other use or function than to reduce the active life span of this Club.

I joined the Club in October, 1964, and one has only to review the competitions write-ups and photographs to verify my comments upon abuse of vehicles and subsequent attitudes towards damage caused since that date.

There is no doubt that much work is put into competitions by the organisers, and I for one would much prefer their skill, thoroughness and ingenuity to be channelled towards Lagonda preservation and not Lagonda destruction.

I am also surprised that the Committee have not seen the light before now with regard to the value and effectiveness of competitions within this Club. Lack of attendance and/or support has always been prevalent in every magazine since I joined, together with the views and comments of disappointment from the organisers who spent much time to prepare the competition concerned. It is startlingly obvious that the majority of Club members feel as I do about competitions.

The present state of apathy in the Club, I feel, is a direct result of 95 per cent. competitions, and

only 5 per cent. social activities, and it is now time to present the Club with a new image, in short a 1967 attitude to 30 plus year old cars.

A new Club must arise, and develop a closer spirit of solidarity, a proud feeling of "I've got a Lagonda AND a Club", and not just leave membership at sending subs annually and "that's yer lot". The fact that constant reminders have to be made for these surely supports my opinions of present "member apathy".

The social side of the Club should and can be developed and exploited to such a varied level as never before visualised or expired.

Internal sections for the preservation and welfare of Lagondas and their drivers should be created. The brainwave of the Rescue Squad, well organised by David Johnson, is a first class example of the type of attitude that should be nursed within the Club.

I have a thousand and one ideas at present circulating, and if I could be of any help whatsoever on the organisation side of a compact, social, family Club, I would fall over backwards to do so.

I have a great love for the car and the Club, and it upsets me to see such a golden opportunity being passed by.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance.
RAY ATTWOOD (A24),
Aldershot, Hants.

A Change for the Better?

Dear Sir—Frankly, I'm surprised, that with all the current concern over diminishing support for club activities, no one has realised the connection with the 2-litre.

Surely one of the major sources of pride for the vintagent is his dexterity in changing up and down the worn chipped (well in my box) gears, devoid of syncro-mesh from birth, in utter silence save the burble of the exhaust.

Yet never a written word; can I be the only one to suffer the shame of forerunning sonic booms with a sub-chassis noise of equal magnitude? How else can you explain falling attendance. Why do the old faithfuls invariably turn up with a big hairy dog aboard if its not for the value of a graunch-obscuring growl?

Unfortunately I have no dog, and the one next door doesn't like Lagondas. Besides I'm always panicking when he's around, thinking the blob of solder has fallen off the rad or the seal in the water pump gone again!

And so I've been forced into removing that vast steel covered mass, with front seats rusted in place, and to balance precariously, painfully, on the gearbox, trying to make adjustments while bits of perished burnt, rubber fall down my neck from the wiring above, and old Castrol R ruins my Sunday trousers below! Even writing for the Mag is easier!

After reading the manual, I thought all would be plain sailing, but after twice setting everything up as per the book, and greasing here, there, and everywhere, all to no avail, I began to wonder.

Next I disconnected the clutch stop, with no improvement, although I was getting better at removing the floorboard without my language becoming too profane.

And so there I was again, with all those horrid little bolt heads on top of the gearbox digging into me, baffled!

I shuffled round to face Parkstone, and lo, like all the spanners and the feelers I'd been using, the penny dropped, metaphorically this time, not down under the gearbox and out through the hole in the undertray!

The rivets holding the fabric coupling together were standing proud (bet you've not looked at yours lately!) The disc compressed with long service; the adjustment to the ejector stop (this is a technical article) useless.

A temporary repair with shim washers brought the coupling back to original thickness and there I was, up and down the road, up and down the gears in silence, until all the tele-fiends were out complaining about interference and next doors' dog hoarse, trying to out-roar a Lag!

Well that's how its done friends! So take heart Wilby—no more moans in the Mag! Stand by James Woolland for the rush!

When all the 2-litres hibernating mysteriously have been doctored, and come out in their hundreds, you'll have me to thank.

And if this bit of technical expertise doesn't put old Forshaw in the shade, well I give up!

I. FULLALOVE,
Cranleigh, Surrey.

Over to Jollop!

Dear Sir—Advice to you, Jollop. For repairs and a suitable consideration I can let you have (cash of course in advance) a 2-litre engine. The con rods for three cylinders have not come through altogether. They are sticking out of

the plug-holes. But the fourth cylinder a beauty it is, as good as new entirely. You will only have to cut the two parts and then join them accurately to fit.

For body, the rear end of mine is also tatty. "Worn out with sitting on, it is" says Blodwen, "and repair it you must with cow-droppings and insulation tape."

No financial recompense wanted for this information indeed.

For the oil, there's wastefulness for you. Scrape up what remains on road surface and put it back.

Whatever happened to the two pigs? Certain I am that one I saw sitting opposite to me in a train to Cardiff reading 'Financial Times'.

HWLL MORGAN,
Glamorgan.

Car Artist

Dear Sir—Possibly some of your members may be interested in having original paintings of their car(s), and in this connection I should like to mention a young artist whose superb quality and talent is, it would seem, quite unknown. This chap has just completed a superb "portrait" of my 4½-litre Lagonda, and in my opinion the quality of his work far surpasses anything that I have ever seen in motoring art. He has only very recently returned to this country after long spells abroad, and is consequently not well in touch with the vintage movement in this country, but he is a tremendous enthusiast for real motor cars as well as having such artistic talent.

He is: Mr. L. A. Holloway, 17 Langley Crescent, North Woodingdean, Brighton, Sussex.

A. B. DEMAUS,
Worcestershire.

David Brown 2.6 and 3 litre Engines

Dear Sir—I read with interest the letter from Mr. C. L. Christiansen in the Summer 1967 Magazine, and his invitation of comment and/or criticism of his scheme for main bearing shells, line bored, to overcome the sad list of shortcomings of these otherwise splendid engines.

Without doubt, the underlying weakness lies in the circular aluminium bearing housings, the proportions of which seem to me to be far too delicate for the task in hand. The internally ribbed crankcase may or may not distort, but I cannot quite agree that circular housings for the mains, per se, are the root cause of the troubles.

The crankcase itself is line bored to receive the housings, and surely, the machining of circular objects, albeit split, is something which is easily capable of having close tolerances held constantly during manufacture.

What I am saying then, is that even if Mr. Christiansen's high load shells are used, and line bored as he says, whilst you would undoubtedly start off with all bearings dead in line, the fragility of the aluminium housings would still be there, and I am afraid that I cannot envisage a permanent cure lying in this direction.

Would not good solid billets of mild steel, with the two halves held together with long countersunk cap screws and having say just one oil transfer hole, ensure that the actual main bearing had a fair start in life. I think it would.

Presumably, Mr. Christiansen writes as a user of the Vantage engines with 8.25 to 1 pistons. The previous owner of my 2.6 Lagonda had changed the standard 6.5 to 1 pistons for the higher compression ones, and subsequently, lowered this to 7.5 by means of an additional copper gasket. But 16,000 miles later, the big end bearings show serious deterioration, and I have formed the opinion that the 6.5 pistons give the bearings a better life, and for overall longevity, an upper rev. limit of 3,500 should not be exceeded.

B. SHIPLEY,
Aldershot, Hants.

News from Australia

Dear Sir—I met by sheer chance a member in Trafalgar, Victoria, Wes Southgate. I was driving along a country road minding my own business when I espied 100 yards away across a railway line the familiar lines of the tail end of his LG6 drop head. This is a lovely car which he found in a chicken house, and is restoring beautifully. It is original and complete.

Since my own LG45 tourer arrived out here in December it has been attracting a lot of attention. I have still to get minor damage done in shipping repaired but otherwise—no problems. The only one I had was making both headlights dip. I eventually got a double filament bulb to fit and a base for it, so by drilling one small hole and leading another wire across from the L.H. one I got double dipping of a sort—enough to keep them happy but a b—— awful light 35w compared to 60w.

DAVID LEES,
New South Wales.



RESTORATION of VINTAGE and THOROUGHbred CARS

No. 1—Straighten the Chassis.

James Crocker's Rapier chassis after off-track excursion at Oulton Park,
in June 1966—not the owner driving!

LAGONDA SERVICE



We have a large stock of useful spare parts for Lagonda cars still available. Although the demand for parts has diminished over the last few years and prices have increased considerably, we can still assist Lagonda owners with the majority of parts required for re-building and servicing the numerous pre-war Lagonda Models.

New parts are made up in small batches and consist of gaskets, valves and valve guides, pistons, cylinder liners, clutch and brake linings etc.

We also have a stock of used parts taken from dismantled cars. Often we supply Lagonda owners with cylinder heads, crankshafts, cylinder blocks and similar components which are very difficult to obtain when required.

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