



# **THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 71    Autumn 1970**





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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: Peter Densham's M.45 and DB4 G.T. provide a contrast in coachwork styles.



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## NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### Can Anyone Help?

A few of the faces on this photograph look familiar but where and when it was taken is something of a mystery.

The first on the left is without doubt Bert Hammond, the third from left is said to be Robin Jackson the well-known tuner and standing in front of him is Arthur Fox. The tall chap looking over Arthur's shoulder is his chief mechanic and can be seen in all the racing photographs taken years later when the 4½-litre Lagonda team was being run by Arthur Fox.

The person second from the right is Tim Rose-Richards the racing driver who certainly drove a Talbot for Fox & Nichol in the early 1930's.

Who then are the others, and where were they

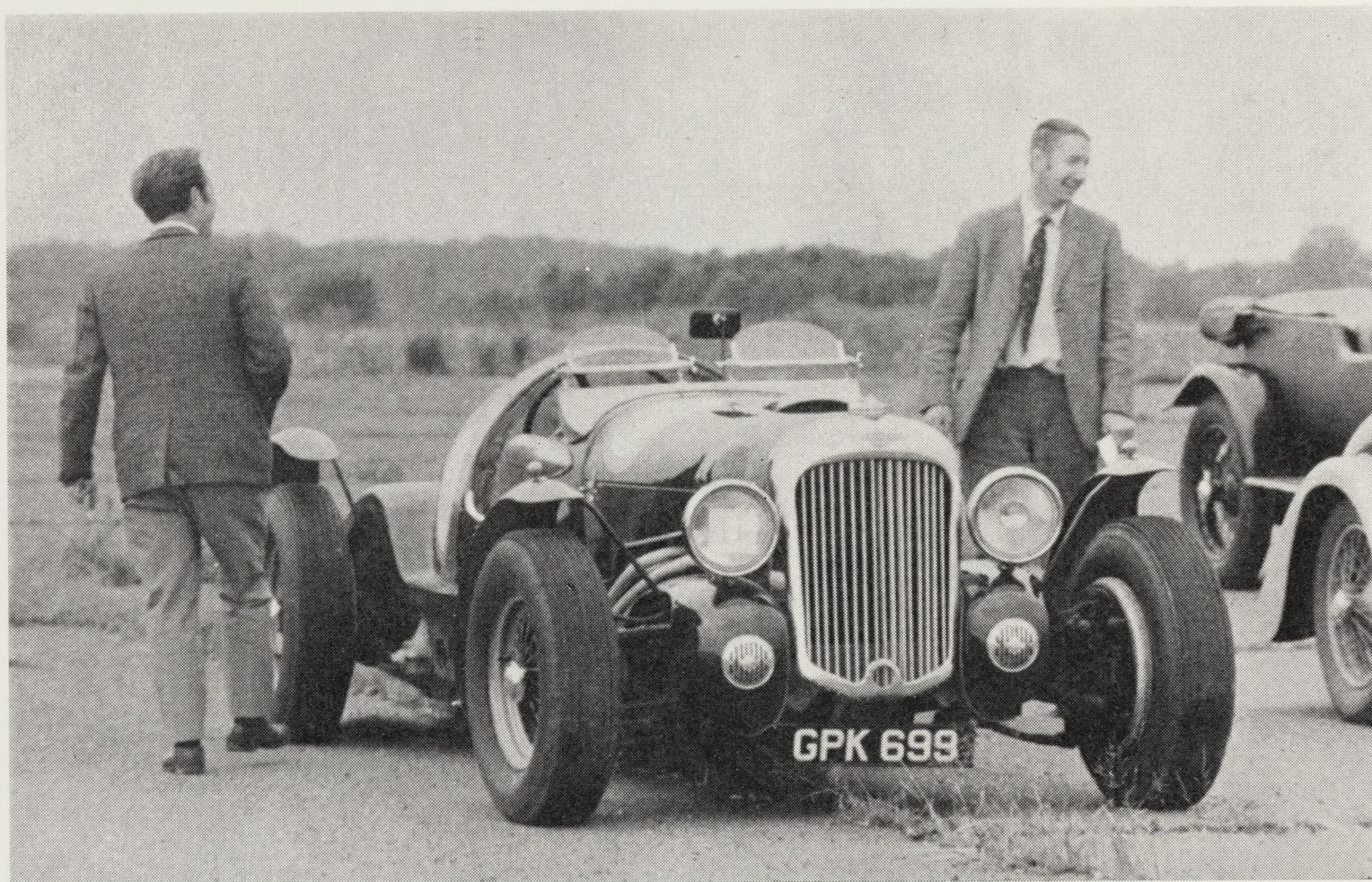
going? Clearly on a boat, to Ireland for the T.T. or Le Mans more likely. As Bert Hammond is involved it suggests early Lagonda days, so as a pure guess it could be the 2-litre party on their way to the 24 hours race in 1928 or 1929. Any suggestions or facts would be welcome. M.H.W.

**BOOK RECEIVED.** *The Grand Prix Mercedes-Benz Type W125, 1937.* By Denis Jenkinson. Published by Lionel Leventhal. 28s. (£1.40).

Grand Prix cars in the 750 kg. formula period from 1934 to 1937 have since become known as the Titans. In this authoritative book Denis Jenkinson recounts the fortunes of one of the mightiest titans during the 1937 season—the Mercedes-Benz W125. As the dramatic events of that year unfold much interesting technical data is revealed about the Daimler-Benz Formula One team and its battles to fight off the challenges from its rival Auto-Union. The casual reader of motor racing history as well as the serious student will find this well-illustrated book deeply interesting and informative. A.W.M.







Hine and Abson look pleased with the V.12.

*Photo : Tony Wood*

#### *LAGONDA CLUB—BENTLEY DRIVERS CLUB*

### COMBINED DRIVING TESTS—FINMERE—19th July

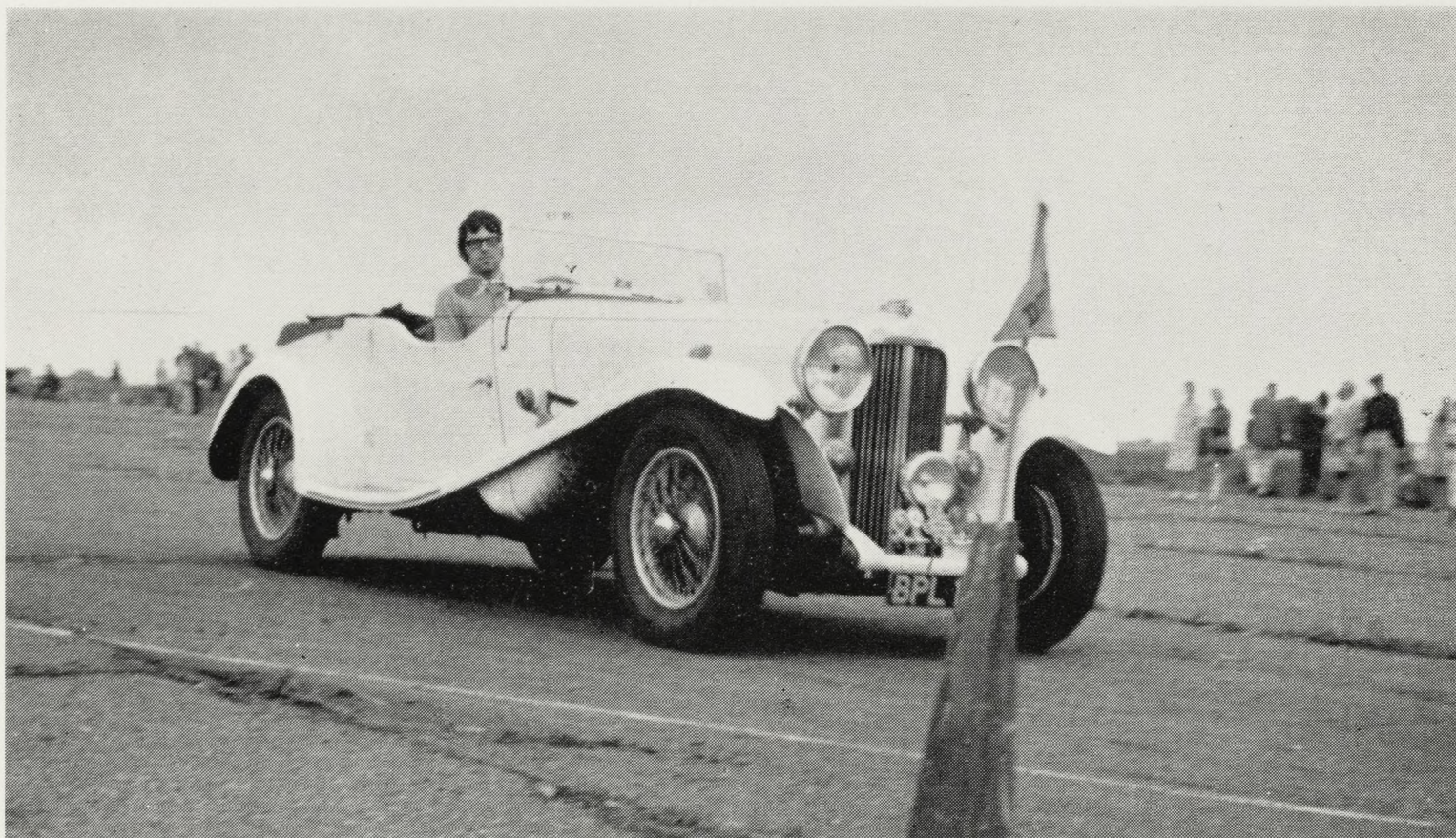
ANYBODY WITH ANY SENSE, HAVING LOOKED AT the sky on the morning of Sunday 19th July, would have taken his umbrella to Finmere. Especially as it had poured with rain nearly all night. As it happened the rain held off and a most successful meeting was held. There was an excellent turnout of 52 competitors, 32 Bentleys and 20 Lagondas, and as usual the best Bentleys proved too good for the best Lagondas although there were some very creditable personal performances by Lagondas as well.

Many of the competitors had been at the V.S.C.C. Silverstone the day before. In particular Rusty Russ-Turner had brought his magnificent Tim Birkin Blower Bentley. Something of an armful I would think in driving tests. Other Bentleys which were raced with considerable success the previous day and also did well in the driving tests were those of R. A. Collings and

Harvey Hine. David Hine had collected a First and a Second place and then had a go with his magnificent V.12 Lagonda—another largish car for today's proceedings. Jon Abson managed to get a run at the driving tests with Elliot Elder's remarkable Rapier which had not been going right at Silverstone, and it was only discovered too late to race, that the valve timing had been a tooth out! Never mind it was put right for Finmere and Jon took a very creditable second Lagonda place to Maurice Leo in the David Brown V.12 which he had refrained from entering in the V.S.C.C. Silverstone—no doubt to make sure of his win at Finmere!

Our reverend President Mike Wilby who used to be one of the most spirited driving test exponents before he took on the responsibilities of chairmanship, had expected to be driving James Crocker's speedy Rapier, which had suffered at





Andy Cawley catching up.

*Photo : I. Macdonald*

the hands of the handicappers at Silverstone, but AHN 730 evidently took umbrage and swallowed a bit of its valve gear and even Elliot Elder was, apparently, unable to supply the missing piece on the spot.

Gordon Rider had also been at Silverstone the day before with his most effective Lagonda M.45R and while he did not actually race it he certainly got into some pretty tight places around Woodcote to maintain the honour of Lagondas among the Frazer-Nash, Morgan and Alvis men. It must have stood him in good stead because he made third Lagonda place only eight marks behind the very quick Rapier which also had the advantage of its Wilson preselector gear box apart from the obvious advantage of its size.

There were six tests, three in the morning and three in the afternoon—the same tests as last year and I suppose the regulars are beginning to know their way around by now, but to equalise the chances each competitor was supplied with a booklet describing the tests and explaining in very complicated language all the ways in which marks could be lost. Each entrant had two shots at each test and only the best try counted—This was fortunate for some!!!

Test 1 was a sort of figure eight designed mainly I think to increase sales of tyres and door handles

—particularly of some of the big saloons! In order to confuse the reporter and perhaps a few competitors the second test was called “test 3” and involved going into garages backwards and forwards. This had a disastrous effect on Lagonda gearboxes, Andy Cawley driving Gordon Rider’s M.45R failed to find reverse gear and Paul Whitman in his 2-litre had a similar problem. Both were seen reversing later so no serious damage was done—Peter Whitman even had an extra go at this test—I don’t know whether it counted or not. Maurice Leo showed his class here in the DB V.12 making fastest Lagonda time. Valentine’s beautiful Lagonda V.12 seemed slow off the mark and must have required some very precise navigation to get into the garages which were not really big enough for it. David Hine in his V.12 seemed to be going faster in reverse than forwards—perhaps its got something to do with the aerodynamics of his beautiful car. Roy Paterson was going well especially as he was running-in his car.

It was good to see a DB 2.6-litre Lagonda performing, especially one so beautifully turned out as Peter Loe’s. He did very well indeed finishing 5th Lagonda and of course winner of Class III except that this class must have been included in Class II.



For some reason or other Test 3 seemed to make the Bentleys stall. Weatheritt and Russ Turner both stalled but were able to restart. Mrs. Mountford also stalled but apparently without self contained means of restarting and external help was required. There were several very carefully restored Bentleys and in particular the beautiful 3½-litre of T. K. Wilyman which also put up a good show. Harben's Speed Six with Gurney Nutting body was prominent—what a job it must have been to drive—even forwards the vision is strictly limited, but in reverse—only the most meagre slits for rear view. The reporter was also confused about this car because it was listed as a Bentley V.6. Collings was very ambitious in his 3/4½-litre and learned the tests quickly as his position in the results shows. About this time, Harvey Hine's very fast 3/4½-litre Bentley was boiling furiously as if to suggest tea time. It was being used by three competitors so had every excuse to be pretty warm—Harvey himself was keeping cool in a pair of snazzie blue shorts.

Cole who did very well in another 3/4½-litre Bentley was also keeping cool—he's one of the few I've seen smoking a pipe while doing his driving tests—must help, he was one of the quickest!!

The 2-litre Lagondas were very good indeed especially at Test 4—a complicated in-out-round the houses—sort of thing at which Alan Brown made fastest Lagonda time. Very creditable indeed but then those 2-litres do steer so well don't they! and the clutch stop must help a bit when you keep changing from forward to reverse. Of course the pre-selector is the box for these oscillating tests and Jon Abson proved it by doing fastest Lagonda time at tests 5 and 6 after lunch. He also did fastest at test 7, but that was in a straight line.

Test 5 was a simple sort of hesitation waltz, good for showing up any play you may have in the transmission. But Test 6 really did make them work, it was quite exciting too. Roy Paterson very nearly got a Marshall who, for no real reason, was standing as an extra hazard right in Roy's line. It was a "chose your own route" test and Roy had foxed him by his choice. I think Roy got an extra go because it slowed him down having to stand on the seat and shout over the windscreen. Some clever footwork—quite unhurried—on the part of the Marshall avoided a calamity.

Dumps in a fast 4¼-litre Bentley and pink and white striped peak cap really had them guessing. After circumnavigating as many marshalls as he could find at great speed he finished Test 6 where Test 7 started. He made up for it second time round though being one of the fastest on this test.

Test 7 was simply an acceleration and braking test in which Harvey Hine made fastest time in the 3/4½-litre Bentley but only a fifth of a second faster than the incredible Rapier which made fastest Lagonda time. Even Maurice Leo in the DB V.12 who did this test in a cloud of burnt rubber and oil smoke could not come within two fifths of a second of the flying Rapier.

Amery put a fitting end to the proceedings by getting the throttle stuck open on Harvey Hine's Bentley which then hit revs. never before attained by such an engine which was switched off very promptly. A lot of unburnt gas must have got into a hot silencer because there was the most awful bang. However a minute or two later a very relieved owner was able to start the car again and all was well.

I. G. MACDONALD

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## More Memories from Frank Chasemore

MY APOLOGIES FOR WASTING EDITORIAL TIME and space with the unpardonable offence of writing something which could not be understood. I shall now creep quietly out of the literary world and devote my declining years to tending the bonfire at the bottom of the garden. I stoke better than I write, anyway.

'The Ship' is the hostelry that nowadays faces the works from the opposite side of the Causeway. But in the days before it sailed across there, its back entrance was a mere six feet from the machine shop wall. In fact it looked—and for all practical purposes was—an integral part of the Lagonda factory.

These ties were so close that a door in the machine shop coincided exactly with that at the rear of 'The Ship', a piece of imaginative planning which made nonsense of that repressive piece of legislation known as the Licensing Laws; to say nothing of providing a constant source of comfort in times of stress—of which there were plenty when producing Lagondas.

Now for the copper hammer security system. According to Ken Lipscombe (an authority on



this as well as on engines) the disposition of the hammers at the moment of truth was as follows . . . one with the waiting driver . . . one with the man covering the bank entrance . . . and one inside the bank in the hands of the man whose job was to protect Miss Corby of the Wages Office while she collected the cash and acted as bait for the baddies.

The driver and Miss Corby were, of course, stuck with their jobs, but the other two were co-opted on the day by the simple method of looking around for anybody who didn't seem to be doing much. Those chosen were usually delighted with the prospect of getting out of the place for half an hour, not to mention the possible bonus of coshing somebody and becoming a hero.

This was particularly the case on the day that Ginger (recalled as 'not too bright') was taken from his dark world of the greasing pit and offered the prospect of high adventure among unlimited lolly. Furthermore, he had been chosen for the task of guarding Miss Corby. His instructions were to 'stand well back against the wall, to keep that thing out of sight, and to look as if he wasn't there'.

Now this was all very well, but you could not actually see all that lovely money standing right back there, so Ginger moved up close behind Miss Corby and gazed with rapture upon a sight that might never come his way again. His excitement mounted as more and more bags and bundles of the stuff were dumped on the counter. Finally, unable to contain himself any longer, he tapped the grill joyously with his copper hammer and informed the somewhat shaken bank clerk that 'Five pound-odd of that little lot belongs to me!'

I would like to sign off by dropping a few names for Roy Paterson—mostly remembered from the late thirties. The Dukes of Kent, Marlborough, Richmond and Gordon . . . Lord de Clifford and Prince Bernhardt of the Netherlands. From the world of entertainment, Ralph Richardson, George Formby and Mabel Constandourus, and Richard Fairey from aviation, plus Dorothy Paget representing the Sport of Kings. Also the one and only Charles Brackenbury, who made frequent sorties up to the West End enthroned upon a wooden test-driver's seat mounted on the buzz-bombed chassis of the V.12 he had driven in the 1939 Le Mans.

Mike Wilby prompted these reflections.

## A Short Journey by V.12 Lagonda

THE V.12 ROARED INTO LIFE AS THE IGNITION button was pressed. The car had been fully serviced and the 20 gallon tank filled.

My two friends and I were soon speeding down the dual carriageway of the A12 for a bank holiday weekend. The holiday was to be spent at my uncle's farm near Loddon which is 12 miles from Norwich.

The sun shone, the hood was down, but it got rather draughty as it always does at 80 m.p.h. We bypassed Chelmsford and Colchester our first stop was at Stratford St. Mary for food and drink, and within seconds of continuing our journey we were up to our 70 m.p.h. cruising speed. The car responding in a superlative manner. After passing through Ipswich we stopped for petrol (I have come to the conclusion that cars of this type should be given free petrol).

On arrival at Loddon we were offered a meal of lovely thick rashers of bacon and fresh farm eggs followed by two cups of tea, which brought new life to our bodies. Later we took the car into Norwich to spend an enjoyable evening in a well known bar, returning to the farm some hours later.

The singing of the blackbirds woke me to find another day without a cloud in the sky. After breakfast we all went out to test drive my uncle's latest Ford tractor, using its eight forward gears to their full effect. 30 m.p.h. on (or is it in) a tractor was a very new experience for us all, and great fun.

Eight forward gears reminds one of a 3-litre Lagonda with so many forward gears that we would use a computer to work out which gear one was in, if it was made today. After our tractor experience, we had lunch, after which we went in the car, to the village pub for a quick game of darts and an enjoyable drink.

From there, we went to Great Yarmouth, spending the late afternoon and evening there. The following morning we awoke to find a ground mist lying across the fields like a blanket but as the sun grew stronger it dispersed. After a late breakfast or was it an early lunch, I tried my cousin's 'Mini Cooper' which of course was so different to my other car experiences that it took a few miles to get used to. I was then able to

*(continued on page 18)*



## PARIS-NICE 1970

By ROBBY HEWITT

LAST WINTER I HEARD OF THE PARIS TO NICE commemoration run organised by the Automobile Club of France. This I thought would be a good challenge to womanhood and the ex-Vokes 3-litre Lagonda I had acquired earlier in the year.

I can't say that I received much encouragement from my friends "... you will never make it ..." — "... to far ..." especially when it was discovered that this year it was to go via Turin. The preparation started. KY 1700 was stripped down to a boy-racer condition in readiness for a body respray, seats were strewn about the house awaiting the Connolly's Leather Treatment, the photographic darkroom was full of P 100s and the windscreen parts after rechroming and everything was chaos. I couldn't possibly see how all the bits were ever going to make a complete car in time for the Paris-Nice, especially as everything took twice as long as promised. Two days before we were due to leave the car seemed to be a runner and ready to go, except that it did not have a bonnet—that was still being resprayed and the five foot long hinge had still to be assembled.

Friends said "What clothes are you taking Robby?"—"Clothes!"—I hadn't thought. . . . If that car wasn't going we weren't going either. I had decided that as the car was "my folly" I wanted to drive it, so it was no good taking a chap along; they always want to drive. So I persuaded my friend Janis to accompany me so that I was at least assured of my share of the driving—she doesn't drive. Departure day arrived, the four-seater had become a two-seater with luggage room (where did they put their luggage in the good old days of the Grand Tour?). Everybody had been so sceptical about the whole trip that we seemed to be carrying enough spares to build another Lagonda. The spare half-shaft seemed to cause a lot of amusement. . . . The Motto seemed to be "when in doubt, take it" which also applied to our personal luggage arrangements. It was a good thing that we had turned down several offers of well-meaning travelling mechanics.

We set off, leaving London for Newhaven and I was listening to the beat of those 3-litres . . . will it make Newhaven, let alone the South of France . . . this must be madness. The front carburettor

decides to flood, jiggle the float tickler, eye full of petrol, ah well, nothing desperate. So to French soil and a night at Cleres at the Pichon hostelry. Jackie Pichon still wants the Lagonda for his museum, I say not unless I can have his 1910 Gregoire. . . .

Next day in to Paris where we arrive just in time for the evening rush-hour. More by luck than navigating we manage to locate our hotel. Funny—the steering usually pulls to the left . . . a puncture in the right front tyre accounts for the difference. At least we are in sight of the hotel. There we meet up with two of the English entered cars, a Delage and a Salmson. That evening off to a gathering of the French Vintage movement. Early to bed thinking of the following night of no sleep at all. The next morning Janis gets out the map (of France luckily) to try and work out where we are going. It all looks a terrible long way and I don't want to know about all that, that's her department, she is the navigator, I am only the driver. As we don't have to report at the start until the evening we decide to have our hair done and five hours and many francs later we emerge well coiffured, into pouring rain. We collected the car from the garage and once more set off across Paris in the rush-hour for the start at Les Invalides. I soon found that if I left the smallest gap in front of the Lagonda it was immediately filled by a small French car. Janis isn't sure which way Les Invalides is but thinks "it used to be down there". Ah well, at least we have made the start. We are given a large envelope which contains all the clues of what we are supposed to be doing and our Rally Plates, which we wire on the front and back. KY 1700 is left at the start and we set off for the Dubonnet cocktail party and all get a bit merry on Champers. Janis punches me in the eye, it was something I said about "six cylinders . . .", I take a look in the mirror and burst into tears! It's all the tension of the start, the thought of motoring right through the night, and that car being all my responsibility.

Nearly starting time, which is fifteen minutes after midnight, and I've only got four wheels, "where is that chap who took the fifth saying he'd mend the puncture". I can't start without the spare. Back to the start, it's midnight, the arc lights are on, lots of people and cameras, the cars start off one at a time, the crowds cheer each one off. "Help, it's my turn next, must go, where is Janis, can't go without Janis, no sign of her,



must go they are waiting". Drive off with a Frenchman on the running board who is promising he will show me where to fill up with free petrol. A quick tour of the square, no free petrol, too late, back again to the start to find my navigator. The Frenchman disappears into the vast crowd and returns with Janis—what a relief. By now the last competitor has left, how are we going to find our way out of Paris to the Autoroute. The problem is solved by a chap who escorts us on a motorbike, out as far as the Motorway and we pass a crowd of the more confident entries having a noggin' at a roadside cafe.

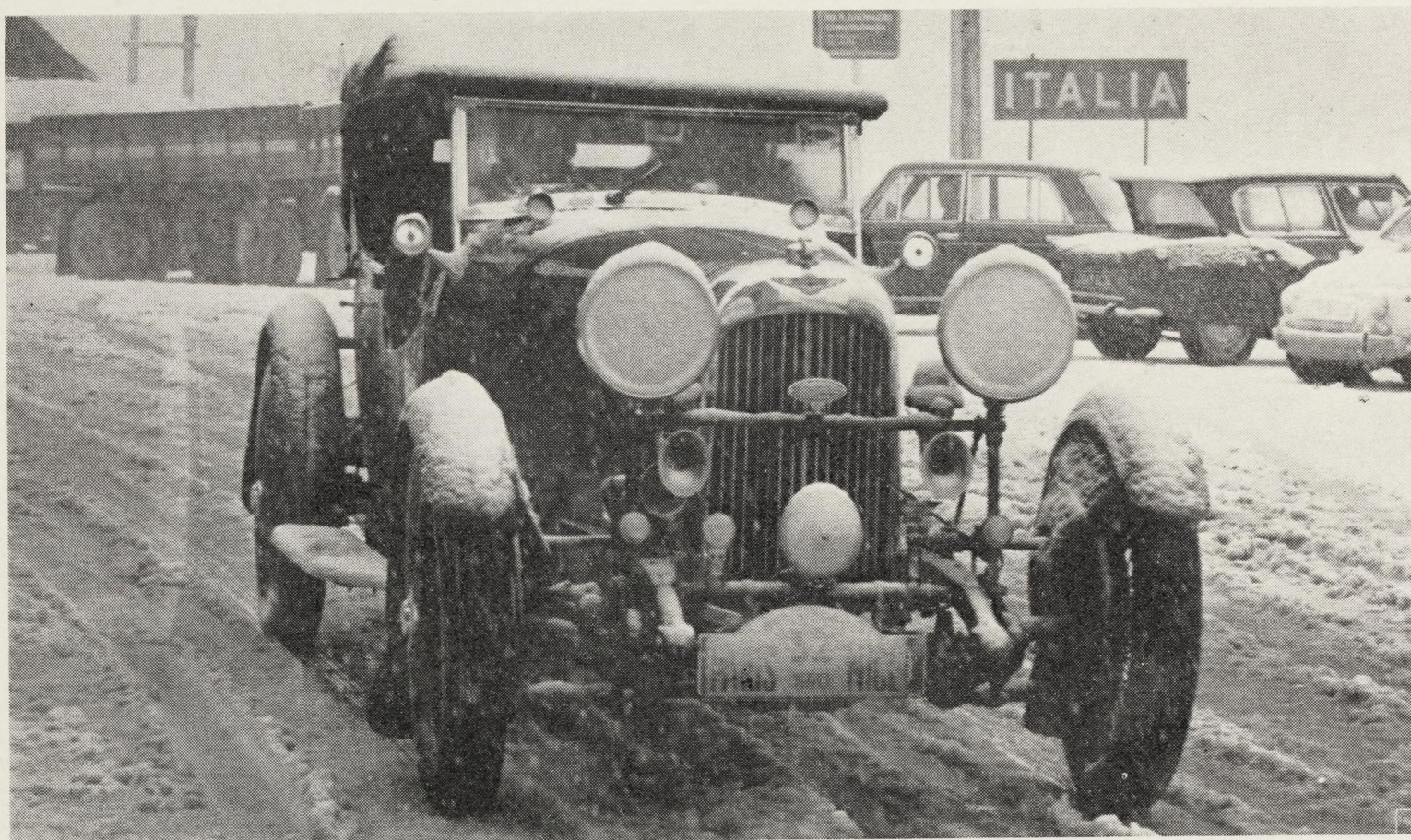
Well at least we were on our way south, I couldn't see very much for the P 100s might be legal (double dipping and all that) but are pretty useless for driving on strange roads and the windscreen wiper is not as effective as it might be, but at least the Autoroute is straight. After a few hours we pulled in at a motorway garage along with some of the others and various people do small adjustments. My tools are all neatly packed in the rear foot wells, underneath all the other luggage, so everytime anyone wants anything, out comes all the luggage. It soon starts to get light and there is plenty of time to reach the breakfast stop. We pass the Delage which is having electrical trouble and is having its coil changed, and then leave the motorway to the very welcome breakfast stop at Beaune. There are two local receptions where the girls are dressed in traditional costumes, and present each car with a bottle of the local wine. The bottles are added to the luggage department and off we go towards the lunch-stop just outside Macon, at the Chateau St. Jean. This turned out to be the most splendid place, a superb Chateau and room for all the cars to be lined up beside the long terrace, while we ate the most fabulous lunch in the sunshine. As one might say "and a very good time was had by all. . . ."

When the time came to depart we were presented with yet another bottle of wine, 5-litre size this time, and we put it in the back with the others, the luggage department now starting to make gurgling noises. We decided to miss out the visit to the wine cellars in Macon which was planned for the afternoon, and make for Annecy where we were to spend the night. A lovely steep mountainous road took us towards Annecy and the Lagonda was going well. There was a great temptation to press on a bit, but it had been

drummed into me that Nice was a long way and I was advised to keep the cruising speed down to 50-55 m.p.h. At Annecy the cars were parked in an official guarded park and bedded down for the night; a quick wash and brush up for ourselves at the hotel and then we were off to an official reception and dinner at the Casino. The hardest part of the Rally seemed to be keeping pace with the social side of things, as everyone by then was beginning to feel the need for sleep.

The next morning the book of words said "Depart pour l'Italie"—at 8 a.m. and that sounded desperate. I left Janis to clear up the room and went to the car park to do all those things that I have had instilled into me, like checking that the car was still there, and seeing that it had oil, water and air in the right places. I made sure that this time I collected my free issue of petrol and returned to the hotel for my navigator and the luggage. Janis was there with her suitcase waiting for me, but my large suitcase full of all those clothes that I have never had the time or inclination to wear, is not there. I had left it at the reception but the hotel knew nothing about it, so I go and see the Rally organisers and they suggest that maybe some other competitor has picked it up. I have visions of attending the Gala Dinner at Nice in my blue jeans. There was nothing to do but set off 'pour l'Italie' once again being last away, but at least the car was going OK, which was the main thing. There seemed to be no sign of the 70 other competitors, so we must have been last and then the torrential rain began. The front of the hood would not clamp down after the face-lift to the windscreen, so the driver had to change gear and hold the hood down with the same hand. At that stage one of the organisers told me that another competitor ahead of us had my suitcase, which was something of a relief. We reached the entrance to the Mont Blanc Tunnel and met a very early Amilcar panting and being fed water from the mountainside. Into the tunnel we went and the navigator excelled herself so that we won't take a wrong turning anywhere! On the Italian side it is snowing and the Italian customs men welcome us and wave us on. All feeling seems to have gone out of my right hand and we can't locate the navigator's gloves that she thought she brought, so I have to suffer. The ravages of the past winter have played havoc with the mountain road down into Italy and the Lagonda, followed by the little Amilcar, made a





The 3-litre forges through bad weather at the Italian frontier.

*Photo : Junior*

strange sight weaving around the huge pot holes.

The next stop was for lunch at St. Vincent and we were definitely running late, most of the others seemed to have eaten and gone on towards Turin, but what is more they seemed to have eaten the place out of food. On along the Autostrada towards Turin we went, where we were all supposed to meet to be led into the centre of the city for a reception at the Fiat museum. Now we were really late (all the fault of the suitcase, of course) and most of the others had gone on, but a party of six cars was left over so one of the organisers headed us into the city and, of course, it was rush-hour and the rain was pouring down again. After lunch we had put the hood down and now we could not stop to erect it again in case we lost the other cars and were stranded not knowing where to go. We used all available bits of rag and dusters to wrap round our heads and it was the navigator's job to keep wringing them out. A kindly Italian lorry driver gave us a plastic sheet and we rushed on and after a hectic half hour all six cars arrived at the Fiat museum where a cocktail party was in progress, the cars all being parked conveniently out of the pouring

rain in a vast garage adjoining the museum. I seemed to miss out on the cocktails part as it appeared to be a good time to leather down the car and investigate the sodden luggage compartment. Everything was wringing wet (I must get around to water-proofing the tonneau cover) and while I mopped up, my navigator did the social bit, enjoying Fiat's hospitality for two and also taking in a tour of the museum. With the cars safely locked up for the night we were collected by two coaches and delivered to our various very comfortable hotels.

Next morning we were picked up by coach at 7.15 a.m. and returned to the car park and commenced our daily task of repacking the luggage department, made increasingly difficult by ever growing number of bottles of vino. This packing was most important as unless everything was strategically stowed the tonneau cover refused to button down—everything was still soaking wet. We filled up with petrol and this time determined not to be last again, setting off behind the official car at the head of the Rally. We were not there for long however, my navigator says "we go right here, funny that all the others



are going left . . .” We get back on the route and of course there is no sign of the other cars, but we head for Cuneo and the French border, running along pleasant tree-lined roads. There is more rain so up goes the hood again in case it is not “just a passing shower” and then felt the need for a brief mid-morning stop for coffee and cognac before carrying on to Limone Piemonte and the lunch stop. The road started to climb now and became more interesting as we approached the mountains and the air is considerably cooler. On arrival at the lunch stop it was a fine sight to see all the cars lined up in the village square, with the church and little houses all surrounded by mountains. Cocktails were by courtesy of Martini in the local cafe and then we went by coach to a hostelry for lunch and as it started to wind its way up the road it started snowing. We all had a merry lunch and came out to find three inches of snow on the ground and no sign of the coach. Somehow the organisation had slipped up, so we either had to hitch a lift or walk the mile back to the square where the cars were, but it all added to the fun and we got ready to “do” the Col de Tende. There was a slight swopping round of passengers as Janis decided she would like to travel in a hoodless Salmson, so we set off with snow coming down hard. As the road started to climb I could see a traffic jam of 30 or so of the others cars rapidly becoming stuck in the snow so I decided that it was an occasion to justifiably “press on regardless”. Luckily nothing was coming down the pass so we moved over to the left and sailed on up to the top of the Col without any trouble and decided that it was time for a warming drink in a conveniently placed cafe. At the top of the Col de Tende there was about six inches of snow and all was chaos as the cars came through. Later we heard that two cars could not get through that day as the pass had to be closed. The Lagonda had gone very dark inside, the hood being up and the windscreen blotted out with snow except for a small area in front of the driver. We arrived at the frontier panicking slightly as I realised I had Janis’s passport in the car and wondered if I ought to wait, or would they let her through. We were waved on and cheered by the frontier police so that settled it, we went on and hoped all the cars got the same reception. Apparently the Salmson was waved through as well, which was perhaps just as well for it did not have any brakes!

The Lagonda had behaved beautifully over the pass, taking the hairpins happily in its stride and when the road started to straighten out in the valley I realised it was all over. “So that was the Col de Tende they’d all been talking about . . .” I had hardly noticed it and felt like doing it all over again. We crossed another frontier back into Italy and then ran along one of the most picturesque winding roads cut into the mountain rock, heading for Ventimiglia. Hewitt had a slight moment when she “lost it” on a wet bend, luckily with nothing coming the other way. When I have a slight moment that is the time for the passenger to stop map reading and start worrying. We crossed into France again at Menton to start the last stretch to Nice. Now there are three main roads from Menton to Nice, the lower Corniche, the middle Corniche and the upper Corniche. We had a lovely drive along the coast road, on the lower Corniche, fighting our way through the packed Riviera towns and didn’t see a single Rally car. It was only later that I discovered that my replacement navigator was no more proficient than my first, as we were supposed to have taken the Grande Corniche, or upper road, and congregate at the end for a ceremonial entry into Nice in convoy. Oh well, we missed that bit, but we did find a pleasant bar down by the docks. Having all arrived there was a splendid reception for us at the Festival Internationale du Sport Automobile, which included a Racing Car Show coinciding with the Monaco Grand Prix. The cars were left in an enclosed parking area and off we went to our hotels and that evening we all attended a Gala Dinner at the Plaza Hotel. Each car crew was presented with a finishers’ plaque and many prizes and trophies were awarded. Somehow or other Janis and I ended up with the Coupe des Dames, but I shall never quite know what it was for.

Apart from the one puncture and the glass falling out of the oil pressure gauge the Lagonda had run perfectly from London to Nice, via Paris and Turin. All we had to do now was to drive back to London, but that is another story.

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What a grand story and congratulations to both driver and navigator on collecting a cup. We look forward to hearing about the return trip.

EDITOR



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## BORDER RALLY

14th June 1970

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TRUE TO FORM THE BORDER RALLY WAS RUN IN beautiful sunny weather in the delightful rolling country of the Border. The organisers thought it was going to be too easy this year because there had not been sufficient time to think up enough of the sort of clues now expected here, but one or two of them stumped the field.

There were the usual regulars entered this year. Robin and Mairwen Colquhoun of course—Exceptionally this year one of the few (three to be precise) who did NOT bring their real cars.

Harold and Betty Golding with their magnificent 2-litre and its not just pretty, went on the Sardinia Rally last year you know! and I had to turn off to Rothbury to avoid the indignity of my 4½-litre being overtaken on the way home!

Good old Jimmie and Mavis Cairns and the most magnificent 16/80—He's won the Border before so he hasn't much chance. Pity because its a beautiful car! Main trouble is he has a sense of humour so he won't take umbrage.

Turnbull Harrison turned up again with his delightful M.45 "Effie"—How *do* these chaps keep their cars in such good condition. Turnbull tells me he has retired and he now can't understand how he found enough time for work!—He's going to live forever—I hope so anyway because he enjoys it!

Alan Didsbury is the most reliable 2-litre man—he doesn't read any of this nonsense about double dipping lights—he's got the original mechanical dipping arrangement—and what more reliable? He'll win yet—His handicap is that we try to catch the bright ones.

Elliot Elder only misses the Border when he has that fantastic Rapier of his racing or climbing hills somewhere else on the day. He turns up most times in a V.12 and nearly everytime he's been up to the early hours of the morning making either the Rapier or the V.12 go—Quicker!! He always brings a smashing bird with him too!

"Humph" is a car which has made the trip to the "Border" a few times but it has now changed hands.

Tony Adams turned up this time in BTO 536. A new member and his first competitive meeting. We'll be seeing more of Tony—especially as he has plans to return "Humph" to his original

glory as a 3½-litre touring machine—This should be good.

The map measure gave a route mileage of 24½ with a detour of 2¾ miles to pick up a bonus point if the competitor felt so inclined—a total of 27¼ miles. Congratulations to J. C. Boylan the winner and to Tony Adams who both managed to return 28 miles for the trip! Longest run was 57 miles although several came near to this figure! This must explain why you always see people travelling in the opposite direction in this sort of event! I'm always so confused in these events that the characters coming the other way always convince me that I am wrong—They always look so damned cheerful.

When we left Newcastle the event was over-subscribed but due to some inconsiderate ailments of George Done's 2-litre and Ted Townsley's alternative transport, we actually started within the legal limit imposed by the R.A.C. As a matter of interest it may be assumed that George Done's car does not like travelling South because although he makes successful forays into wildest Scotland and the Isles with it he has entered it for the Border Rally every year since 1961 without the 2-litre ever having actually arrived at the start—Perhaps a previous owner in England used to kick it George! The present problem is a crown wheel and pinion for the light type rear axle—Anyone who can help please contact George at the address in the register.

To return to the Rally, the first competitor, David Jenkins with the only Rapier this year, was ready in good time and actually got off one minute early. David was also first back and put up a jolly good show. He has made an excellent job of improving his Rapier DFV 662 since I last saw it a couple of years ago. When I knew it this car had a rather horrible radiator cowl stuck out ahead of the front wheels making room for a somewhat lengthy distributor stalk driven from the intermediate chain sprocket which drives the two overhead camshafts.

David now has the proper radiator with real Rapier cowl and the sparks are correctly produced by a magneto driven from the back of the dynamo. The distributor stalk has found an honourable position on Elliot Elder's famous facing Rapier which had been having trouble with oil pump drive so Elliot can now use the dynamo drive for an external oil pump which he tells me is highly successful.

Competitors were told how to navigate around



a 25 mile loop in a way that the organisers fondly hoped might confuse some of the field. As it turned out most of the navigators had minds as twisted as the organiser's. Only Dick Hore was induced by subterfuge to take a wrong turning. This must be one of the few occasions on which his logical mind and Ph.D were more of a handicap than an asset. I promise to put in a question on the calculus next year Dick!—(Note! must go to Evening Classes on that subject).

There were 12 questions requiring answers to earn marks—all strictly in the order they would be seen if the course was tackled correctly. There was only one of these questions that nobody could answer correctly and this was the one that we hoped would sort out the winner. As it turned out it didn't sort anything out but fortunately we had a brilliant winner who was well ahead of the field and his daughter the navigator was so good that he accomplished the win in the minimum number of miles run. Our second decider was however needed to separate a few ties.

An interrogation of navigators after the event seems to prove that one of the questions was answered correctly even though the wrong article was found, but this is a disappointment that organisers learn to take philosophically—Every time you close one gap the perishers find another.

At least half of the field looked curiously at the organisers on their return and two or three made so bold as to enquire after our health (in spite of the sunburn we had acquired lying on the hotel lawn while they were away).

A fine high tea completed the afternoon and the breathalizer blew most of us away quite early.

I. G. MACDONALD

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## LOST FOR EVER

IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE 1939 WAR RACING CIRCUITS in England were hard to come by and for many years Brooklands stood alone. In the 1930's Donnington Park came into use and as it was the nearest thing to racing on real roads it caused great excitement. Quite simply it used the estate roads at Donnington Hall, a large mansion that had housed prisoners of war in 1914/18 and was to do the same in 1939/45, and so the circuit ran through woods, past a farm, under a narrow bridge and through a gate where there was only

room for one car at a time, and how rough and narrow the road was too!

It soon became a popular venue and the Donnington Grand Prix became one of the major races in England and achieved glory for ever more by getting the full Mercedes and Auto Union teams to take part twice. Such powerful cars had not been seen here before and the noise and thunder must still be in the ears of those lucky enough to see them.

The circuit was extended in consequence and this new portion consisted of a run down a very steep hill at the end of the straight, round a most definite hairpin bend and so up over the brow of the hill again where the German cars were going fast enough to leave the ground with all four wheels.

The T.T. came to this most exciting circuit in 1937 as regretfully the Ards circuit was no longer available following the fatal accident in 1936. As in 1936 Arthur Fox entered, this time only the two seater LG.45R driven by Charles Brackenbury and Charles Martin. As can be seen from the photographs the car ran well for a time but retired when the stub axle broke and the race went to a French Delage one of a new breed of lighter, more powerful, easier to handle sports car that really eclipsed cars such as the Lagonda.

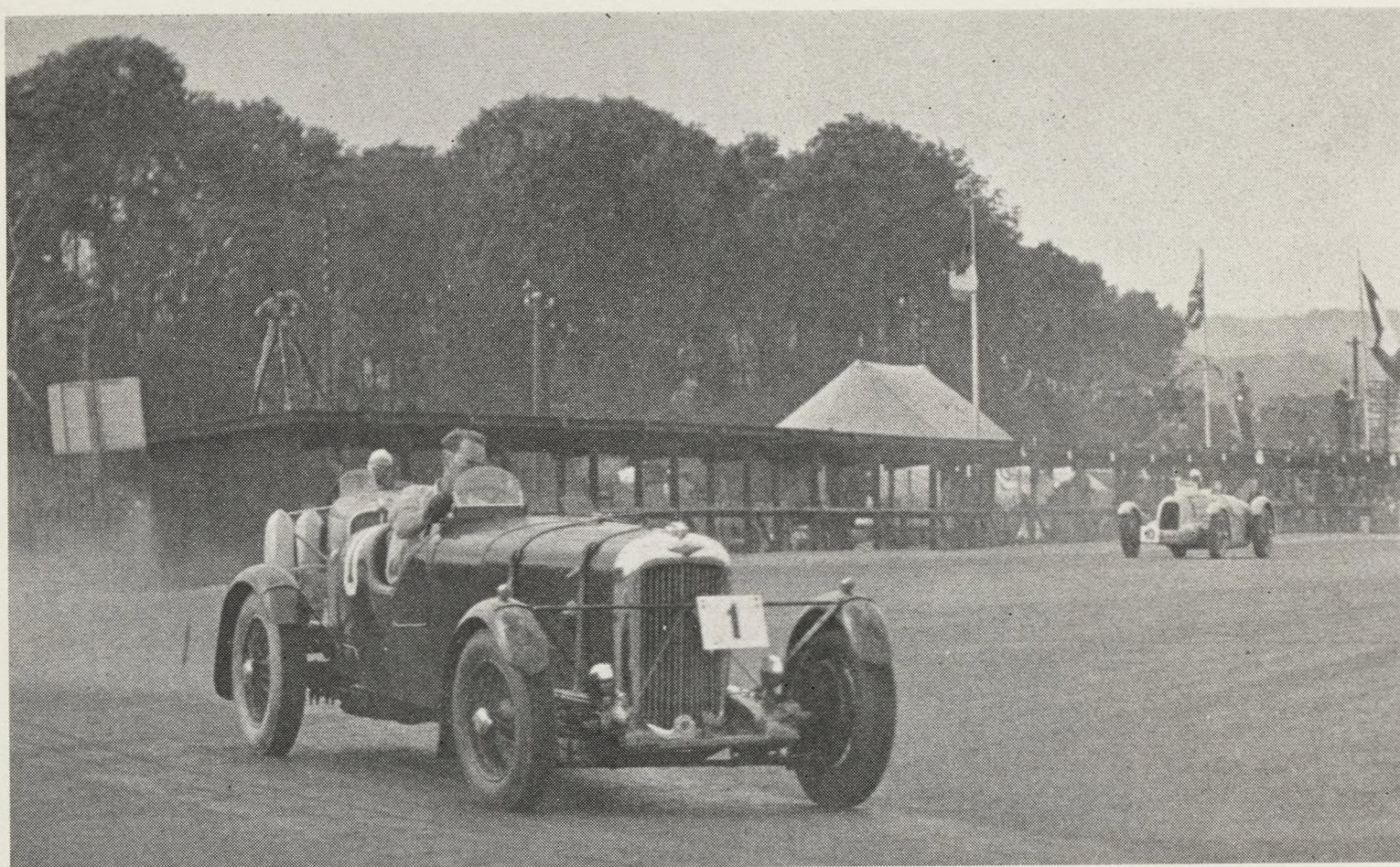
Opposite, two such cars are seen chasing Brackenbury past the primitive pits into Red Gate corner, right behind him is a Delahaye and further back a Talbot.

The close-up shows Martin who was always a very relaxed driver swinging the car round the Melbourne hairpin. The doors which can clearly be seen had to be cut into the body that year to comply with the amended regulations and necessitated re-routing the outside exhaust pipe and the fitting of a very clumsy silencer. This silencer was still on EPE 97, the car in question when it came into Bill Michael's hands twenty years later!

The new extension and the sharp corner can be seen overleaf as Brackenbury follows a 328 B.M.W. which in its turn is pressing a Riley Sprite of the type that won the T.T. in 1935 and 1936. Coming down the hill and into the corner is a Singer, one of a team that caused much excitement on their first appearance in the 1935 T.T. when two of the cars had a fracture of a steering ball joint and crashed at different times but one on top of the other. The third car was then withdrawn!

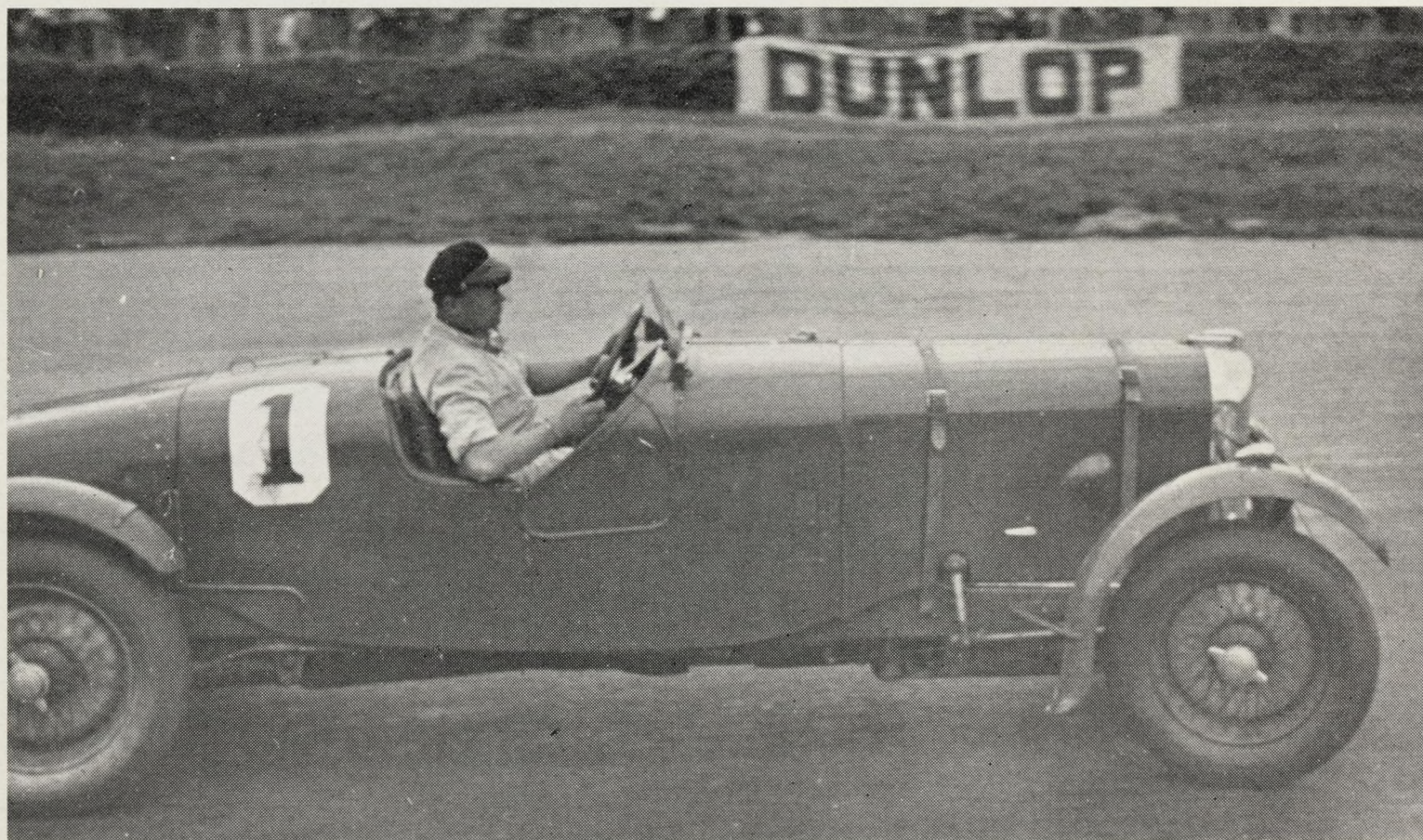
M.H.W.





Charles Brackenbury at Red Gate Corner

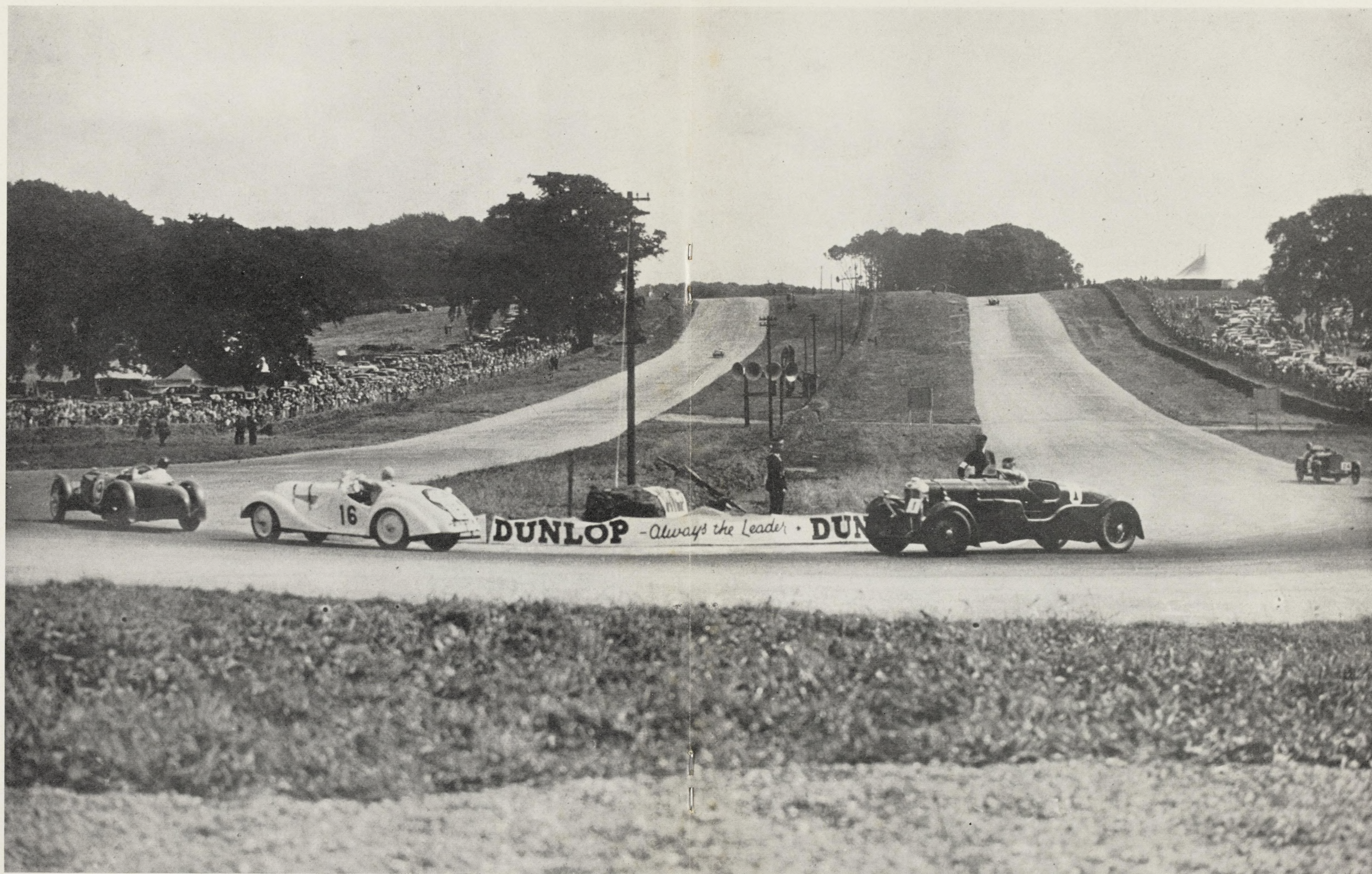
*Photo : The Motor*



Charles Martin at Melbourne Hairpin

*Photo : The Motor*







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## The Restoration of JBG492

### PART 6

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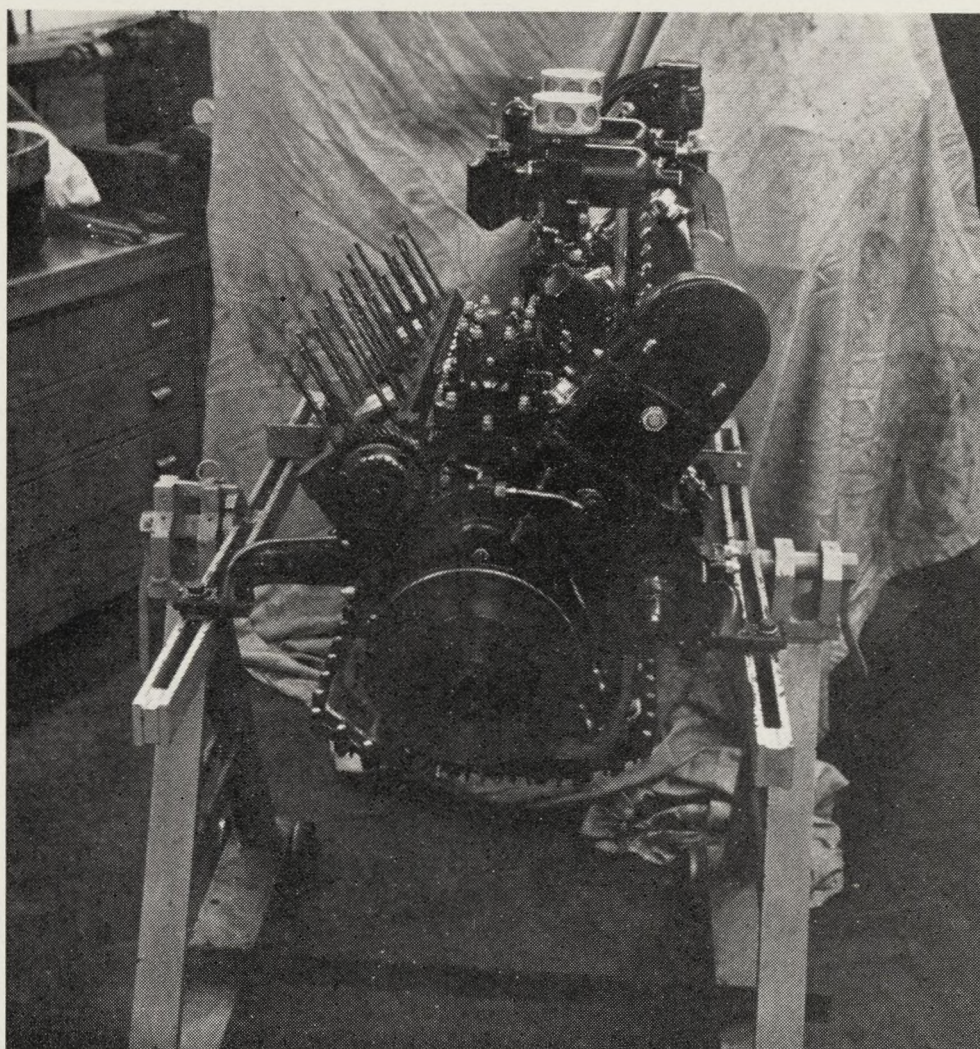
AT LAST THE PISTON MANUFACTURE IS OVER AND I am glad to say that both Bob Watts and myself have each now got a complete set with the 9 to 1 compression ratio. I have used only three rings, two compression and one scraper, and a considerably shortened skirt which modern practice seems to confirm as quite satisfactory on short stroke engines such as the V.12. Having carefully gapped all the rings, the crank, rods and pistons were put in. I was somewhat surprised at the total friction generated by all the rings and hope that this will soon wear off, the engine at first being quite stiff to turn despite all the bearings being perfectly free.

Attention was now turned to the sump. As is outwardly apparent this is very shallow and has a large surface area to give a maximum cooling effect. Inside it is well baffled with a centre compartment from which the pumps draw their supply. To prevent this becoming empty under gradient conditions there are six hinged trap doors in the baffles which form non-return valves acting under gravity. Also in the sump is a large cork float to operate the external oil level indicator and a remotely operated drain tap. I degreased and finally vapour blasted the sump to get it clean. This technique is very satisfactory provided that there are no nooks and crannies which cannot be thoroughly inspected afterwards and every vestige of the abrasive can be positively removed before assembly. The cork float responded to careful sandpapering and two coats of shellac, the drain tap was tested for oil tightness and the sump painted. The bottom half of the crankcase needed very little done to it except cleaning in the same way as the sump. The hole at the side for the one-shot pump was blanked off as this mechanism is not to be replaced. This and the sump could now be fitted. It is very important to get the suction pipe to the oil pump lined up with the filter in the sump before putting on the lower half of the crankcase. This calls for a certain amount of putting together and taking apart which cannot be avoided. About this time I met a man who used to be a garage mechanic in the '30's and I mentioned that I was overhauling a V.12. The only thing that he could

remember about the car was that a customer came to the garage at which he worked with a V.12 in 1939. Said customer wanted the big ends taken up by the next morning. The mechanic remembered taking out all the 36 bolts that hold the sump, some of them extremely difficult to get at with the engine in the car. At last the sump came off but even so no crank or big ends were even visible. At that point they put the sump on again and told the customer to take the car to the works. I was able to confirm that his memory was not at fault and in fact the sump is only an oil tank with a lid on it formed by the lower crankcase. I could also tell him that he would have been somewhat baffled if he had got to the big ends and found that they had no bearings in them to take up.

It now seemed sensible to deal with the flywheel and clutch and to get them attached to the crank. A new friction plate had been obtained from Ivan Forshaw and the clutch springs appeared to be still adequate for their job. Both the flywheel face and the pressure plate were skimmed flat in the lathe to give them a new start in life. The clutch is an absolutely standard Borg & Beck and needs no description here. Two of the toggle return springs were broken but a new set was available ex-stock from Automotive Products. The short clutch withdrawal cross-shaft which is operated by a link from the pedal runs on needle rollers which were quite unworn but this shaft also has a return spring to keep the thrust bearing normally out of engagement with the toggles. This spring was broken as were both those on the two Bob Watts engines and so I have replaced it with a simple tension spring which is easily inspected and, more important, easily replaced if necessary. The thrust race housing slides backwards and forwards on a sleeve bearing which was very badly worn but there is just enough metal in the construction to bore and sleeve this with a bronze liner. All the other clutch parts were in good condition and so the flywheel was fitted to the crank and tested for running true and then the clutch built up with the gearbox drive shaft in position to centralise the drive plate. A new spigot bearing and oil seal were fitted in the end of the crank and a new ball race on the rear of the drive shaft. Hardy Spicer provided new fabric couplings for the universal joints connecting the engine to the gearbox. The clutch toggles were adjusted to give  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. clearance to the thrust race. As usual the instruction book





**Engine with  
one bank  
complete**

gives no guidance and this is only my guess at the correct amount.

I now made my next mistake by fitting the front timing cover. I found out later that this must not be done until the cylinder heads are in place and the valve timing connected up. Having disturbed the timing of the gear wheel in the timing case it is impossible to adjust the timing purely at the camshaft sprocket because one cannot jump the timing chain round the top sprocket with the chain tensioner in place and this has to be put in before the front cover is fitted. I mention this purely to save others who may get involved in a lot of wasted time. None of the above applies when only the heads have been removed as the timing does not have to be disturbed under these circumstances.

The cylinder heads had already been cleaned up and the valves ground. I got a new set of springs made using the existing ones as a pattern but adding  $3/16$  in. to the length guessing that this would be about the amount by which they had collapsed. Sanction II engines have longer

springs than Sanction I and Bob Watts has plenty of new Sanction I springs if anyone should need some.

Both camshafts were in perfect condition as were their bearings. The curved-top cam followers however were a little worn on their working surfaces and I made a jig to hold these for regrinding to the correct radius of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. They were still a perfect running fit in their phosphor bronze guides but the tappet heads had indented on the ends of the valve stems and these were ground off flat. In each case I checked as to whether I had penetrated the case hardening by grinding but all seems to be well. There is a horrible piece of pipework in the timing chain department at the front of each head. This supplies oil to the camshaft and necessitates straightening the old pipe, which is very bent, to undo the union nut at one end. Rather than risk using the old pipe or even using a new one made of copper I replaced this with nylon pipe which can easily be bent in position.

It is essential to fit the induction manifold to



each head before putting the head on the block owing to the inaccessibility of some of the fixing nuts. On the four carburettor engine there is an exhaust heated hot spot beneath each carburettor which takes the form of a copper diaphragm with exhaust gas on one side and the life-giving vapours on the other. I wish that I had the courage to throw all this away as it must detract considerably from the power output. I have a sneaking feeling that the device was only there to make the engine run smoothly at 3 m.p.h. in top gear which everyone was so mad on in those days. However, Bob Watts is making his own design of four carburettor manifold leaving out the hot spot and if his works satisfactorily I can take my hot spots off but meanwhile I am reckoning that perhaps W.O. knew best and leaving things as they were.

At this juncture I was getting rather tired of not seeing a little more spectacular progress and so I decided to force on with one side of the engine only. The near side head was fitted up with valves and manifold and put onto its block. I then discovered about the front timing cover and took this off, fitted the camshaft and timed it, put in the chain tensioner, cleaned and painted the cam cover, fitted the distributor which Delco had overhauled, made up a new ignition harness and behold I really did appear to be making some progress.

I did not like the original water off-take from the back of the head which was in the form of a rubber pipe bent into an extraordinary shape and

prevented from collapsing by an internal coil spring. So I made a rather neater banjo connection, tapping out the port in the head to  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. B.S.P. as the original thread was very fine and rather corroded. I have discarded the thermostat switch from this pipe that used to work the starting carburettors as these will be operated from a switch on the dash. As I had already overhauled the carburettors with the help of S.U. Service department two of these could be put in place. I had a look inside the strange little manifold block which is situated between the cylinder banks to which all sorts of pipe are connected. It is very simple in reality. There is a ball non-return valve to which the induction pipe drains are connected and a straight through connection for the four float chamber overflow pipes. All are joined to a common drain pipe onto the road.

Both the main petrol feed pipe and the float chamber overflow pipe complexes had been broken and mended with Sellotape. These were both made completely new and while I was at it I replaced the starting carburettor pipes which had been somewhat distorted. I now have the whole of the near side top half of the engine finished and should make rather speedier progress with the off-side bank having learnt a few lessons on the way. As a thought for the day with which to finish off, when I wanted to buy a new set of sparking plugs I referred to the instruction manual and I cannot find even a mention in that wretched book that the car has plugs at all, let alone what type they should be. B. MORGAN

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*(continued from page 6)*

enjoy the accurate and quick steering, its responsive little engine, which was pulling us around the bends, with the surefootedness that these Minis are reputed to have, without having to ease up on the accelerator.

A Snetterton race meeting being next on the agenda to which we travelled by V.12. We watched Graham Hill and other famous drivers in their Lotus Cortinas, Porsches, etc., coming in to the S bend on two wheels and going out of the bend, with their engines screaming on the limit of their revs, as they accelerated up to the next corner, and showing up the different types of motoring, which is available to us from V.12 to Minis to Porsches, etc.

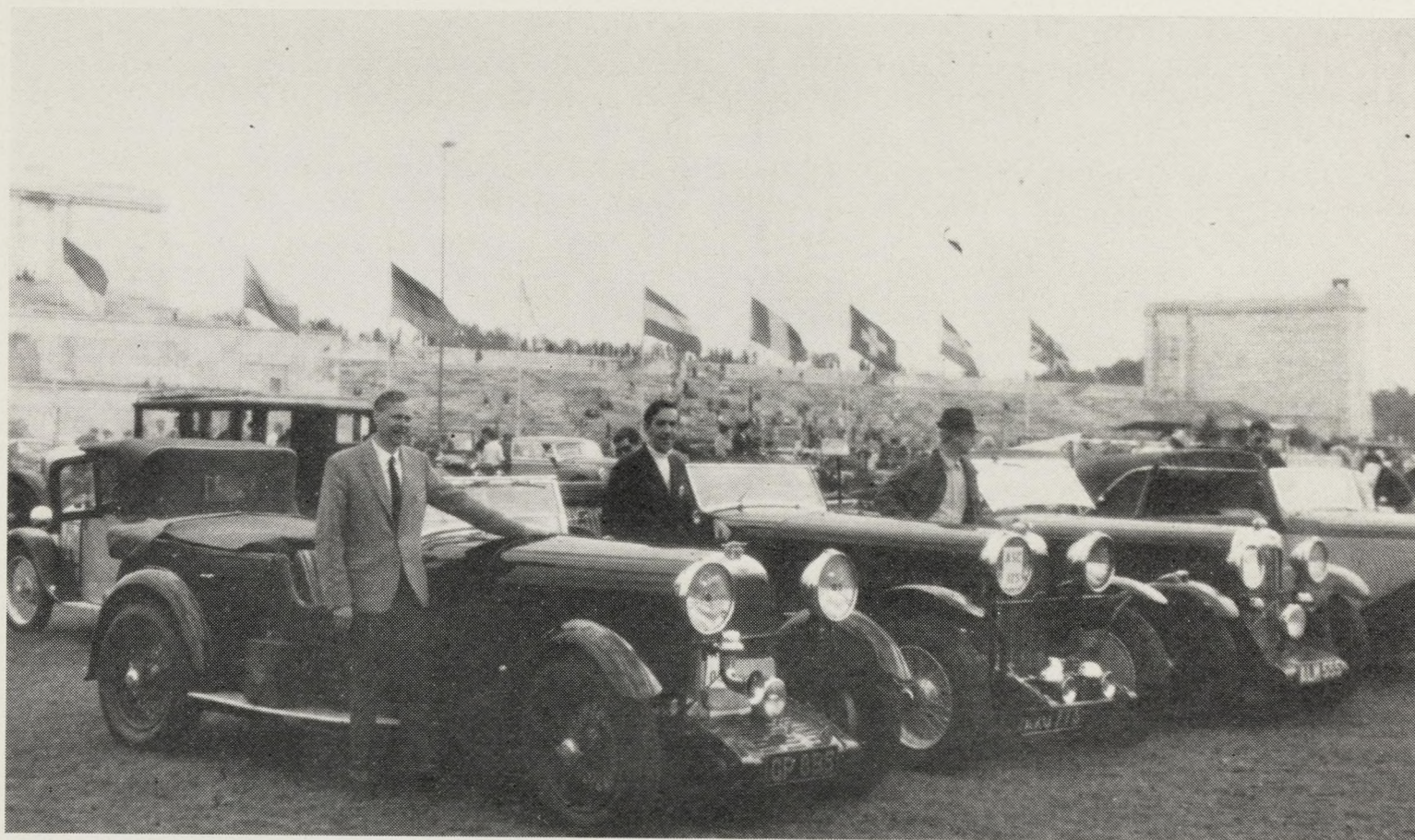
We all seemed to get more pleasure from these saloon races than from the single seaters. Returning earlier than prior evenings to the farm,

because of the early start we intended to have the following morning to go home.

We left the farm at 5 a.m. sharp Tuesday morning, the long bonnet of the V.12 Lagonda cutting through the early morning mist, which lay across the road and fields. From Loddon to Ipswich we only met three vehicles but we were overtaken once by a MGB which must have been doing 100 m.p.h. because we were doing 85 to 90 m.p.h., and so our journey continued at a fast rate and using petrol at what appeared a faster rate. The car being fully extended to well over 95 m.p.h. when the road conditions allowed.

We arrived back home at Ilford in 2 hours 5 minutes, averaging just under 60 m.p.h. for the 120 mile journey. Covering nearly 500 miles and using 50 gallons of petrol, due to the high speeds of the car over the holiday, which was enjoyed by all. A. D. HEARD





A. T. Elliott 2-litre, A. Wittridge 4½-litre, P. Ellermeier 16/80

## EUROPA F.I.V.A. RALLY 1970

HAVING DIGESTED CHRISTMAS DINNER AND ALAN Elliott's excellent account of his participation in the XIV German Schnauferl ("snorter" to you!) Rally, my appetite was whetted to combine a holiday with a continental event, or two.

The ones that seemed promising were the "Coppa Monza" in Milan and the Europa F.I.V.A. Rally, 1970 in Nuremberg, during May and early June and, without more ado, applications were sent off on 1st January. Very soon afterwards a steady flow of information and forms came from Germany, in three languages, despatched by an efficient character known as the Scribblefuhrer which loosely translated means secretary! No reply from Italy.

As usual no advance accommodation bookings were made—with one exception to be mentioned later—as we have never had any trouble in the past, by just playing it off the cuff and pleasing ourselves where we stayed, for how long and deriving some sense of freedom from routine

and overplanning.

Of course, business pressures increased before departing and preflight checks went begging somewhat except that all the oil was changed (Duckham's), points serviced, tappets looked at and a roof rack modified to strap on top of the rear mounted spare wheel. Perhaps I should say that "it" is an M.45 tourer, 1934, used for everyday transport and "we" were my wife, son aged 12 and myself, none of whom speak more than a word or two of any continental language. Just before departing a reply came from Italy! It said do come along and all that, but it was really too late to think about going there the following week.

Armed with three weeks' baggage, about £250, two new inner tubes, spares (learnt from bitter experience; most other things can be made or adapted overseas) and Peter Densham's and Ivor Forshaw's addresses and telephone numbers in case of SOS help. We left Birmingham and thundered off down the M1 at 60 or so in it, now highly polished. Judging from other traffic our real speed with 7 in. rear tyres was about 70 and we arrived on the outskirts of Dover around teatime. A good, inexpensive night-stop was made



at a guest house and we caught the first hovercraft out the following morning.

The ride was "jolty" but a pleasant new experience which lasted only 40 mins. giving us a refreshed, reasonably early start to our first target which was to get out of France as quickly as possible. This we did, arriving in Luxembourg in the evening in plenty of time to find a small hotel/guest house and sit down to a delicious meal and local wine, our lunch having been a quick ham roll. The next day was a relaxed and most pleasant drive in the sunshine through the Mosel Valley and on to a double night-stop at Rausbad, where we have friends from a previous holiday. As soon as we crossed the German border one became very much aware of an acute interest being taken in the Lagonda. They just don't normally have old motor cars on the roads and we were greeted with cheers, handclaps, flashing headlamps, waves and people crowding round wherever we stopped to the point of embarrassment. Again that ride along the Mosel Valley was really beautiful and something we shall always remember.

From Rausbach, N.W. of Frankfurt, we shot off down the autobahn to Nuremberg and straight to the hotel booked by the Scribblefuhrer. After two coffees and a coke which cost over a pound we decided that the Carlton was too salubrious for us and we found an excellent Gasthof (guesthouse) about 10 miles from Nuremberg. These German gasthofs are all up to a high standard, H & C, central heating, doubleglazed, extremely clean, and average, with breakfast, about 25s. per head.

With a day or two to "report" time a couple of jobs were seen to; the car was a bit mud splattered and the mag. points left working loose. A garage owner was delighted to have the honour to be asked to clean the Lagonda, as it seemed to attract customers to his establishment and this menial task seemed highly popular with his staff as *all* of them turned out to clean and polish! What a thorough job, and all for two Marks. A request for some points for a B.T.H. mag on a 1934 Lag. brought a puzzled expression but, on being shown the problem of the stripped thread in the ally mounting he only remained baffled for a couple of minutes before returning with some points off a Goggomobile which were secured by a locknut in a most satisfactory manner.

I'm sure he could have repaired or adapted anything else on the car and confessed that he

liked the dual ignition which reminded him of his days in the Luftwaffe! At another garage the service fell considerably as the frauline type attendant after doing two laps of the car finally deposited the fuel nozzle in the radiator. Fuel, *ordinaire*, seemed about the same price as in U.K. and rather than muck about with litres, it was easier to get so many Marks worth.

Nuremberg impressed us very much as a place of character with many interesting buildings mixed with ultra modern amenities and the usual German very high and clean standards everywhere.

Someone told me not to miss one of the local specialities, a type of small banger called "brotwurst". Being hungry my wife asked for two, my son one and "guts" asked for five. The bangers duly arrived mit potatoes, etc. but we were mildly shocked to find that each was about 10 in. long. Apparently a slight inflection in the pronunciation made about 7 in. difference! The other specialities were large fluffy dumplings and carp without forgetting the inevitable, excellent huge glass of local wine.

Friday was der report tag at the ZEPPELIN-WEISE which is a huge area flanked by rostrums and stands where Hitler did his stuff before the war. We were cordially welcomed and later beset by the scribblefuhrer and the inspector who pronounced it fit to go on the road and gave no bad marks for condition, maintenance, originality, etc.! A large number of the entrants came on trailers and many German owners sported Swiss or British registration complete with CH and GB plates to get around the strict German traffic legislation. Whilst this was going on the German National President swished about welcoming people from the back of a really huge open Mercedes. There must have been about 170 cars all told with a wide variation in types from 1894 on, some such as the enormous Horches and Mercedes were impressive, lots were unknown to me, the German Austin 7 called the Disei was well represented and there were more Americans of the 30's than one would normally see in a British event.

It was clear that in Germany, old cars are a rich man's sport and the typical British tweedy, D.I.Y. enthusiast type was not generally reflected in his German counterpart. Of course we bumped into Alan Elliot and his well known Lagonda although he said he wasn't coming! Couldn't resist it I suppose. We were surprised to have







another Lagonda appear with us, a 16/80 from Berlin with GB plates, etc.! The German owner had only had it a week and it was rather tatty, sad looking and wouldn't start very well, but not for long promised the proud owner who had given the equivalent of £1,000 for it. Someone said that mine would be worth maybe £10,000 in Germany, he is probably bonkers but vintage cars especially the open large and hairy ones are worth a considerable amount of money here, and there is great demand.

That evening we attended the Clubhouse for a reception by the mayor and dignitaries and local specialities (snowball dumplings again!) to eat and drink. This place was quite luxurious and well stuffed—something like the Carlton!—and it was difficult to realize that this was where the Nord-bayern section of the German “old timer” movement met. There are about eight such divisions in Germany and I tried to imagine the Midlands Section of the V.S.C.C. for instance, having such a rendezvous. The speeches were numerous, all in German but I suppose “verr eenteresting”, anyway Alan and I enjoyed the wine.

Thoughts turned to ‘tomorrows’ Rally and craven fear gave way to blissful relief when someone produced an English speaking German fraulein to act as navigator and read the many last minute changes in the instructions (in German).

The morning dawned damp and cool but the enthusiasm and the hordes of excited spectators were anything but cool. For us the good starting and stopping meant no bad marks and we left the start through an avenue of applause and grunts of L-A-G-O-N-D-A and AAH and GUTTE. It said somewhere about averaging 50 km. (37½ m.p.h.) so idiot shot off at a rate of knots past other entrants who stopped at the correct check points whereas idiot didn't.

Fraulein Barbara said “you go more slow” and success seemed closer from then on but not before collecting a crippling number of bad marks. Some of these check points were most baffling and obviously designed to confuse the enemy; I remember a Benz dog-cart driver asking *my* advice on the route outside a farmyard and a forest on a hill full of perplexed vintagents. Lunch break occurred in a pleasant village again full of vociferous spectators but was marred by a quarter mile hike to the restaurant. Wine and snowball type dumplings cheered up Alan who was looking puzzled. Welcome, but slightly

embarrassing comments from the commentator's loudspeaker brought the crowds surging around the Lagonda during the lunchbreak. He announced “my favourite car is here, the Lagonda!” and amongst other compliments, drew attention to an article in their excellent Vintage magazine, being sold to bystanders at the time, which had a five page article on British clubs and featured a “before” 16/80 Lagonda rebuild and a picture of Ivor Forshaw looking, with evident knowledge, at a piece of Lagonda hardware.

Having switched on to the right wavelength for the return leg, few more bad marks were collected and the final tests at the Zeppelinweise were penalty free, result bottom of the class!

The evening winding up dinner dance started as a majestic, dinner jacket, affair in the Meister-singerhalle but lapsed into a semi bun fight for seats; these functions appeared to have far more dignitaries and hangers on than competitors.

The excellent speeches in German were again wasted on us but the meal and event—u—ally the wine were exotic.

Sunday results, prizegiving and speeches in German left Alan and myself unrewarded but the rally pictures and plaques were nice. Amid a fanfare of trumpets and military type music the entire field less casualties (that smokey sleeve valve Daimler?) paraded through Nuremberg for the corso. Barbara had a stiff arm with waving to the crowds; I won't say what else was sore!

On with the holiday, Mad Ludwig's castle, ham roll and wine lunches, large evening meals mit wine, the huge bed with three of us in it which collapsed in the night—“Mum, Dad's disappeared!”—the snow by the roadside in June and a very relaxed stay by Lake Constance for eight days in a pleasant guest house at Hagnau. After paying the bill for three of us, £27, we set off homeward.

The target was a journey through the Black Forest and a nightstop near the French border in order to traverse the last leg to Boulogne in one go. How beautiful and impressive the Forest was, we stopped to enjoy the views several times.

On the last occasion, a new Mercedes pulled up by us and a very interested German called Heinz Hendel, as it transpired, looked at the Lagonda and only wished his friend could see it. He then insisted that we be his guests for the night. He dined and wined us well in his luxury house on the edge of the Black Forest near



Freiberg. Apart from a highly entertaining evening and discussion, he is a publisher, this unexpected hospitality was not untypical of the Germans.

After an early start we crossed into France, over the Vosges hills and the dreary flog on poor roads towards Boulogne. A bit of spitting in the carbs and a curious rattling whistly noise announced when one's foot was hard down, that the Lagonda was a little unhappy. Superficial checks showed nothing expensive was awry and we pushed on at a steadier gait. This meant a dreaded night stop in a French hotel, they don't seem to have "gasthofs" of an acceptable standard. A quoted charge of NF 100 turned out to be over twice that with obscure "extras" but I must say the meal was good; however, the toilet assembly collapsed as I was appropriately positioned, and, amidst the noise and pandemonium I thought my young son would never stop laughing!

After a feast of mussels we boarded the hovercraft and faced a choppy sea and stiff breeze.

The ride was rough and the craft certainly took a hammering besides our tummies, mussels and all. As we got off the handling crew said "wish they were all like that, we spent all our time tying, tightening ropes and straps on these modern cars which leap around all over the place; your Lagonda didn't move at all."

Back on the M1 the funny noise was ignored at a steady 65, into the front drive we went after a most enjoyable trip which we shall always remember. The funny noise was due to the head gasket having blown between cylinders 5 and 6. To sum up the rally I may be forgiven in calling it overcomplicated well-organized chaos. If I point out that the Germans strive for perfection with meticulous care, they nevertheless have little experience with competitive events, and, in this case, with everything being left to one section to run completely, it was asking a lot especially when one realizes that this section has about 28 members with 10 cars only, and (as in U.K.) only about four members being regular workers!

During this July's V.S.C.C. Silverstone I accused Air. Cdr. Buckle of being A.W.O.L. at Nuremberg. His reply was short and sweet "because I was in bloody Czechoslovakia".

The Germans showed a lot of keenness in attending a British Rally of similar type, but none seems to exist. What about it? A. WITTRIDGE

## LIFE WITH AN ASTON

by Peter Densham

HAVING WRITTEN MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY, THINLY disguised by the title 'Lagondas I have owned' (in two parts) there are those who might say that the only possible follow-up would be to drop dead. However . . .

Soon after writing the last instalment I was conscious of a vague disquiet in my motoring; not exactly disenchantment but my belief, oft vehemently stated, that vintage motoring as a practical means of transport began to wear rather thin. I put this malaise down to a combination of several things. Firstly we had two terrible summers and as often as not returned from a day's motoring wet and miserable. Secondly I found the Lagonda being overtaken on the flat by two many inferior machines and thirdly it became increasingly worrying to leave the car unattended for any length of time. In fact I was losing faith and I hope you will read on to see how I regained it.

Without any enthusiasm at all I made a list of possible cars and shortened it finally to Lancia Fulvia, Alfa and Lotus. It gave me no pleasure to tell friends that I was thinking of buying one of these. Who knows what might have happened had I not one day glanced in my driving mirror and there seen the car which was to change my life and, in a roundabout way, bring me back to a proper understanding of the reasons for owning and driving vintage cars.

The car following me was an Aston Martin. I fell instantly in love with it. I hope this is not too strong a phrase; it is true.

I felt envy towards the driver, whoever he might be: the more deeply because I knew that I could never own the car. I was slowing to make a left turn off the main road. The Aston followed. I had immediately to make a right turn into a cul-de-sac and felt embarrassed at the trouble I must cause the Aston driver. To my amazement he followed me and stopped when I did. The driver was a friend who I hadn't seen for years.

That happened three years ago. For two years now I have owned the car, a 1960 DB4 GT. To me it is perfect though a list of the troubles I have had to overcome would make you doubt my sanity.

But what of the Lagonda? In the first flush of this affair I offered it for sale. Advertised it in



the *Sunday Times*, *Motor Sport* and the *Solihull News* for £700! Truly there was a divinity that shaped my ends; no one wanted to buy it—Oh yes, a drunk rang up one night at 11 p.m. to ask if it was a Sunbeam—apart from that a deathly hush and I know that the price was not unreasonable. Fortunately I didn't need to sell it and so I covered it with a dust sheet and went on dreaming about Aston Martins.

In June 1968 a nephew wrote to ask if the Lagonda might grace his wedding. Rather grudgingly I dusted it off and put the starting handle in. Three pulls up and that glorious rumbling started as inch by inch the chains took up the slack, bit by bit the massive engine threw off the langour of its long rest and finally settled down to a gentle 200 r.p.m. tick-over which, it seemed, nothing would ever disturb. Compare this with the agony of starting the Aston with its three twin-choke Webers, its twin-plug cross-flow head and its wild, wild cams!

What was so unexpected about the Lagonda was the friends it made, I hadn't noticed it before. Perhaps I had been too intent on proving that it was 'just as fast as yours'. Now, with the knowledge that speed instantly available, as in the Aston, leads to the loneliness of the long distance driver I was content to potter along between 50 and 60. Moreover, it is a very comfortable car and relaxing. The servo brakes are fantastic by any standards. Its ability to tool in traffic or to take off from a halt line on a Bristol street make the Aston's antics look like the twitchings of a neurotic.

Nor let it be forgotten that many a Cortina GT has been shocked out of its very side-winders as it has drawn out for the kill at the bottom of a long dragging hill only to find the Lagonda still in front, howling along in third gear and gaining. Nothing for it but to drop in to the left again and follow.

And so the summer of 1969 passed pleasantly enough. We chose the Lagonda for short journeys, rallies and picnics with the Aston for more purposeful motoring. Where reliability was the keynote we took Lucy's Morris Traveller and by the end of the year were very nearly bankrupt. I had joined the Aston Martin Owners Club and so there was a social occasion whenever one was needed.

In 1968 I had decided to acquire a garage and tendered to the council for an Arcon-type prefab. My tender was successful and for £50 I became

the owner of No. 8 Jasmine Lane on the Castle Lane prefab estate which was being demolished. The house was taken down, transported here, painted and re-erected. The two cars stand side by side with plenty of room to work round them leaving a quarter of the floor space as workshop and a quarter as entrance and manoeuvring ground. This is rather luxurious and obviously room could be made for a third car. I had made provision for a pit but this has not yet materialised not have I power tools beyond the inevitable B & D drill.

It was in this garage that member Alastair Dick who had bought my 1935 M.45 Rapide started his fabulous rebuild of which I hope you will hear more as time goes on. Only last week he departed on retirement to Sussex.

Shame has almost prevented, until this last paragraph, my confession that on the way to the 1969 AGM at Staines I ran a big-end on my yellow M.45. The circumstances are too amateurish and clumsy-footed to recount here. I limped on to the meeting and back home again afterwards. Now a full year later, the engine is complete again and this winter will I hope see the car ready for 1971.

[This pair of fine cars form our front cover subject for this issue. ED.]

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

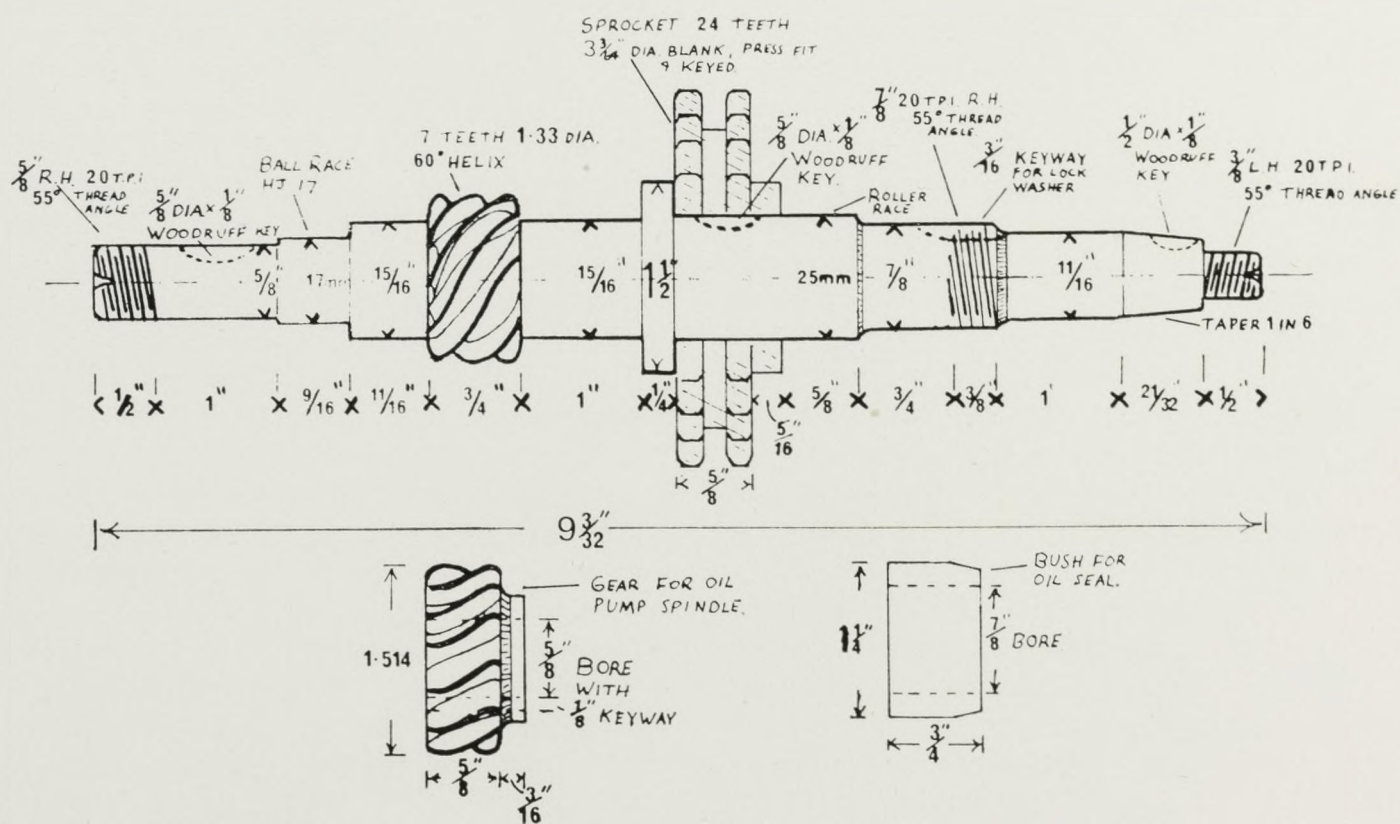
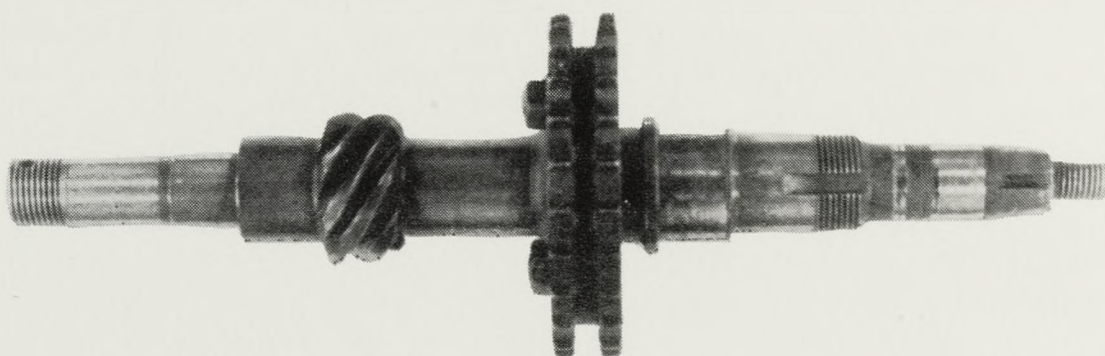
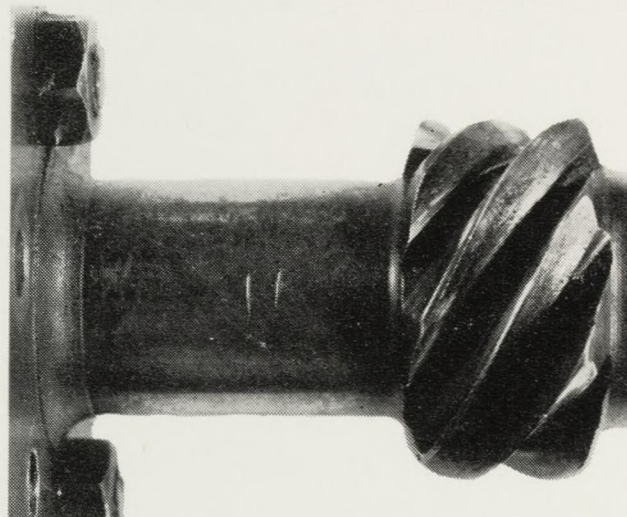
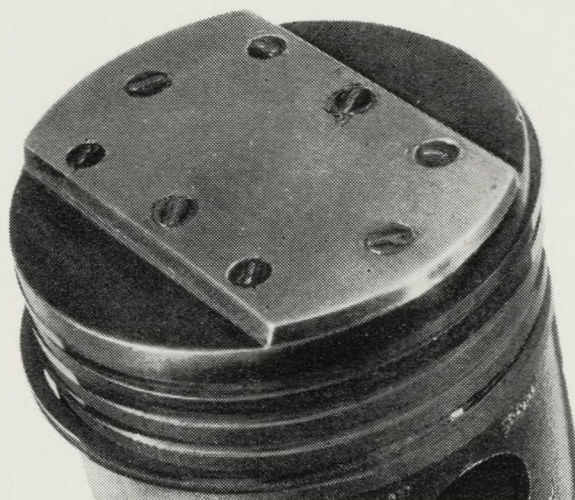
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### V.12 Matters

Dear Sir—No doubt Brian Morgan is suffering already from a surfeit of congratulatory messages for his series of articles on the restoration of a V.12. I would like to add mine and I'm sure all those other V.12 owners who are lethargic when it comes to putting pen to paper. All, no doubt, appreciate these articles and congratulate the Editor on landing these scoops. But many must read them with perhaps mixed feelings.

When not admiring his thoroughness in this work and his energy in uncovering some of the secrets of this wonderful machine some of us are indulging in bouts of self pity mixed with envy for lack of the excellent facilities and friendly bank manager he must have! But even if the devil isn't driving, needs must for most of us and other methods have to be adopted. I was particularly impressed first by his decision to have piston







blanks cast and then by his reaction to his error in machining the crowns. I solved the piston problem by following Bill Summers' advice and fitting Hillman Minx 3 in. pistons at 32s. 6d. each. This results in a slight reduction in compression ratio from the normal 7, but if required this can easily and cheaply be overcome by fitting shaped pieces of aluminium bar  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. wide to the top of the piston so that any desired ratio can be obtained depending on the thickness of the added metal.

The photograph is of a 75 mm + 40 thou. specialloid piston fitted with a  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch top.

This was done to all 12 pistons without dismantling the engine further than removal of the heads—an operation all too frequent with both my engines because of valve trouble which I solved later (I hope!).

The shaped and drilled plate is placed in position on the piston crown and one of the holes bored through the piston crown with a greased drill so that very little of the metal drops into the crank case. The hole is then carefully tapped with a greased tap and a countersunk headed 4BA screw put in position. Then a second hole is similarly dealt with so that the plate is located. Then all other holes are drilled using the plate as template. At first only four screws were fitted but after about 10,000 miles four extra ones were put in for safety, though there was no sign that the existing ones were loosening. The screw heads were tightened with a screwdriver and when home one or two light taps with a hammer enabled a little more tightening. The sides of the countersinking in the plate opposite each end of the screw slot were then carefully drilled at an angle of about 30 degrees to the piston crown with a No. 60 drill. In this hole some  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. steel brads were a tight fit. The holes were drilled about  $\frac{3}{32}$  in. deep and a brad of the right length (this was estimated by eye after the first two or three), when the head was cut off, was bent, not too sharply, almost to a right angle. The ends were placed in the mouths of the two holes and the brad straightened into the screw slot and the ends forced into the holes with a few careful taps with a light hammer. (A four cylinder engine in another car has had similar crowns fitted with only three  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. whitworth screws locked in a similar manner for 16,000 miles, so far with no trouble.) Performance tests were frequently carried out between 5,000 and 10,000 miles. Both acceleration and petrol consumption

with the ignition set at 15 degrees advanced was improved (with  $\frac{1}{8}$ th plates) about 7 per cent. I estimate the compression ratio of this engine was raised from 7.0 to 8.2. The engine is sluggish in daily use if timed at TDC and with my Delco distributors fitted with centrifuged and vacuum advance the engine seems quite happy on those rare occasions when I can open up to about 100 m.p.h.

With Hillman Minx 3 in. pistons now fitted to both engines I am looking forward to the time when I have enough patience and energy to fit  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. or even  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. plates to them.

I could go on detailing my experience as I have experimented with these two engines, a Sanction I and a Sanction II for seven or eight years but before the Editor cuts me short I must mention one design problem at least in the Sanction I engine which nobody else seems to have any bother with. This problem concerns the water pump-dynamo drive spindle.

In the Sanction I engine it is supported by floating roller bearings at the front (new rollers considerably improved this) to a ball race at the rear. Since a right angle skew gear on it drives the oil pumps it might have been better to fit a thrust race at the rear.

Unfortunately a thrust race of the correct size is not available so I would encourage owners to fit a new ball race (R & M HJ 17) every time the engine gets a major overhaul.

The skew gears were badly worn on my engine giving a nasty rattling noise which peaked at about 35 m.p.h. in top and was so bad that one had to change to third at about 30 m.p.h. if wanting to pass a 30 m.p.h. lorry without embarrassment. I decided to have two spindles made on the expectation that the Sanction II engine uses the same shaft. I haven't yet looked at the Sanction II but here's hoping!

The spindles were made from solid EN36 steel the gears cut and the whole heat treated to harden. The chain sprocket was keyed onto the shaft. The original shaft seen in the photograph was made in two hollow halves bolted together at the chain sprocket but this would have been even more expensive to produce. I did, however, get the two shafts for less than half the £50 each quoted by one of our most famous gear cutting firms. Another gear cutting firm in Bristol (Birds) was very helpful and cut these gears and also timing wheel gears in both aluminium and tufnol reasonably cheaply.

F. W. LANDGREBE



## LG.45 Front Hub Mods.

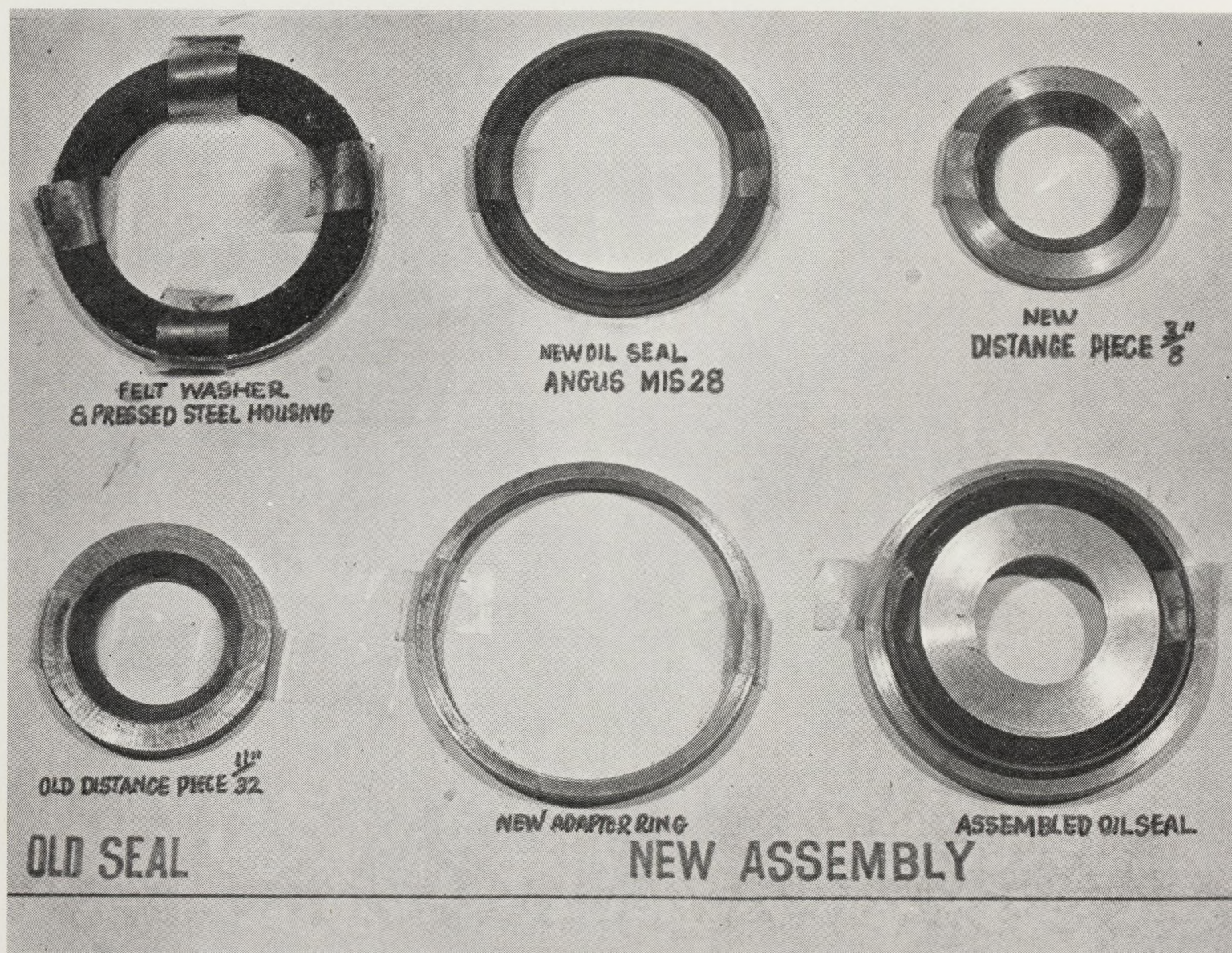
Dear Sir—You have asked for items of interest for publication in the Magazine and it occurs to me that my recent modification to my LG.45 front hubs to replace the standard felt washers by modern oil seals could be of interest.

I enclose photographs which show the parts involved. From the left at the top are firstly the present felt washer and felt washer retaining ring and on the left below is the original 11/32 in. thick distance piece. These are all discarded. In the centre is shown at the top, the new oil seal. This is an Angus MIS 28, 3 1/4 in.  $\times$  2 1/2 in.  $\times$  3/8 in. in size; centre and below is shown the new adaptor ring machined from mild steel, which is 3 5/8 in. dia. outside  $\times$  3 1/4 in. dia. inside  $\times$  7/16 in. wide. On the right is shown at the top the new distance piece, the same shape as before, but increased in thickness to 3/8 in. and the outside finished off to 2 1/2 in. dia. as before, but with a smooth fine

finish for the oil seal. The assembled oil seal is shown at the bottom right, but the seal is not fully pressed home into the ring in the picture.

Unfortunately, a 2 1/2 in. oil seal only 5/16 in. thick is not available, otherwise the standard distance piece could have been used. The old ones could be reused by packing out with a shim 1/32 in. thick but I was not satisfied with the condition of the outer face or the area on which the seal would have to run, so I replaced mine and increased the thickness at the same time.

When assembling, it is advisable to put a smear of jointing compound between the face of the distance piece and the stub axle to prevent the creep of grease between the two. The oil seal retaining ring is made a light tap-in fit into the hub and this is tapped into position behind the bearing cup. The oil seal is made a light press-fit into the retaining ring and is pressed into position with the distance piece placed temporarily in position in its centre resting on the inner Timken





cone (bearing). The oil seal is pressed down just below the level of the back of the distance piece, so that there is about .010 in. clearance between the oil seal and the stub axle flange when this is assembled. Care must be taken that the seal is pressed in squarely. It is probably unnecessary to advise most readers to see that the oil seal is fitted with its open side, showing the coil spring, facing inwards to the hub.

The clearance of ten thou. mentioned above between the oil seal and the stub axle flange is not critical, but is necessary to prevent scuffing or friction between the back of the oil seal and the flange of the stub axle. Care must be taken here to see that there is not too much clearance as otherwise the lip of the oil seal will be too near the edge of the distance piece upon which it runs.

This should be the answer to one's problem of greasy brake linings due to leaks past the felt washer. These felt washers have to be made up specially and are really only satisfactory when new and solid with tallow. These oil seals are not expensive and are readily obtainable and can easily be replaced when required.

There may be some shouts from the purists that the above departs from the original but it does so in the interest of safety and efficiency and on that merit I trust I shall be excused.

E. CHALENOR-BARSON

Cape Town, South Africa

### D. B. Diversions

Dear Sir—God Bless Brian Shipley! that's what I say, he has done more for the D.B. owners than any other.

Why D.B.? He had nothing to do with the 2.6 except pinch the engine for his underpowered 2-litre Aston Martin.

We all know W.O. spent six years (part time) working out the rear suspension and if anyone has worked on the D.O.H.C. engine you can see W.O.'s name all over it.

Just because he was prevented by R.R. from calling it the Bentley Lagonda why does the chap give credit to its maker to someone else.

No it is a wonderful car both to drive and maintain and for those of us with a family you must give them a bit of comfort, but after eight years of troubleless touring I must admit I am looking for a Rapier to rebuild.

However we did get a good write-up in the Spring Social. I was the "yet another DB 2.6

DHC in truly splendid order"—"Alongside a fine DB 3-litre".

Now I went to the Social as I had spent all the winter underneath putting in new front springs and replacing that 9d. rubber washer in the gasket that the works had left out, they had also put the gasket on the wrong way round thereby blocking the water flow to the waterjacket on the inlet manifold, and stopped that oil flow from the can boxes down the side, both sides, of the block. Someone had done a lot of hard work to get this event off the deck and I felt, apart from a day out, he needed support. I think he got it and I had a wonderful time—overheated twice and a o/s front break locked on the M1—and got some very good photos of the cars in a good setting.

So. We sent to the Summer Social at the Gardens. What did I find when I got there?. Three cars! Mr. Lancaster with the 3-litre D.H.C. turned up and turned me green. Jeff Ody came, also F. W. Landgrebe in the V.12 and D. H. J. Clarke's 3-litre Sp. Tourer. Oh yes and someone in a 2-litre who has hung his number plate on the cross brace of the headlamps so I do not know who it is. I have a very good o/s view of the car and if he, or any of the others come to that, will let me know, he can have a copy (en print form) (10 × 8, 4s. to cover cost of paper).

Now the point of the letter. Can we get the DB 2.6 and 3-litre members to move about a bit more, in these cars distance is no object and I feel the only reason we seem to be poor relations is because so few appear at any of the events. I only counted five at the A.G.M. last year.

I want to follow this up with a workshop report on running overhauls including a top head and as I have now had them to bits all over, I will be pleased to meet and talk to any other member about these cars and how to get around some of the problems of keeping them in order.

Why do the insides look so bad, carpets worn through and seats and woodwork scrubbed when the under bonnet view is also so good.

So come on you so called "DB" owners, lets show the Club W.O. did not stop work after he perfected the V.12 and we can all get our car into the condition Messrs. Law and Lancaster have if we put our minds to it and who knows, one day we might, I say might, push the Seaton 3-litre into second place at the *Concours*!

J. MCMURDY

West Dulwich, S.E.21



# REGIONALISATION

Below are listed the names and addresses of local representatives and the meeting place:

Area No.		Monthly Meetings, 8/8.30 p.m.			
1	N. Ireland	J. Longridge, "Rockville", 22 Warren Road, Donaghadee, County Down	North Down House, Comber, Co. Down. 1st Tuesday		
			The Globe Tavern, Joy's Entry, off High St., Belfast. Lunch each Friday for any- one in Belfast on business.		
2	Eire	L. C. Thorn, 5 Grange Road, Rathfarnham	West Country Hotel, Chapelizon, Dublin. 1st Monday		
3	Scotland	J. McKellar-Cairns, 22 Rullion Road, Penicuik, Midlothian	Melville Castle, Eskbank nr. Dalkeith, Midlothian 1st Thursday In conjunction with V.S.C.C.		
4	Border country	I. G. Macdonald, 37 Oaklands, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Red Bar, Ridley Arms, Stannington, Northumberland. Last Wednesday		
5	N. & E. Ridings	D. H. Coates, Hill Farm, Swine, Nr. Hull	Duke of York, Skirlaugh—on A165 and about 9 miles N.N.E. of Hull. Last Tuesday		
6	W. Riding, Notts, and Lincs	Dr. J. G. Rider, The Range, Hatfield, Doncaster	The Hatfield Chace, Hatfield—on A18. 2nd Thursday		
7	Lancs, Cheshire, N. Staffs & Derbys	H. L. Schofield, Foxhill Stables, 271 Mottram Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire	West Towers Country Club, Church Lane, Marple, Cheshire. 2nd Thursday		
8	South Wales	John Batt, 7 Grays Walk, Druids Green, Cowbridge	Bear Hotel, Cowbridge, Glam. 1st Thursday V.S.C.C.		
9	Gloucestershire, Bristol, N. Somerset & S. Worcester	J. Organ, 'Onaway', Chalford Hill, Stroud, Glos.	The Compass Inn, Tormarton, Glos. 4th Friday		
	and for the Northern part of this area	J. Organ	The Royal William Hotel, Cranham, Glos. 3rd Thursday		
9a	Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, N. Wales	D. P. Crow, 181 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Salop.		White Horse Inn, Wenlock Road, Shrewsbury. 2nd Friday	
10	Warwicks, S. Staffs & Leics	C. H. Noltan, 29 Hollyhurst Road, Banners Gate Sutton Coldfield		Manor House Hotel, Old A45 at Meriden (not by-pass). 2nd Tuesday	
11	Essex & East Anglia	J. D. Abson, 11 Highfield Green, Bury Lane, Epping		The Old King's Head, Stock (S.W. of on B1007, Essex. 8.30 p.m. 1st Wednesday	
12	Bucks & W. Herts & Bedfordshire	D. D. Overy, The Old Cottage, Bourne End, Boxmoor, Herts.			
13	Berks & Oxon	M. B. Jones, 4 Grass Hill, Caversham, Reading		The Bull, Sonning. 3rd Friday	
14	W. Home Counties, Middx & W. London	A. H. Gostling, 8 Ridgeway Road, Isleworth, Middx.		Anglers Hotel, Staines. 2nd Wednesday	
15	Kent	L. N. Buck, 21 Willow Walk, Culverstone, Meopham		Park Gate Inn, Hollingbourne, Kent. On A20, ¾ mile from M20. 2nd Wednesday Sir Jeffrey Amherst, between Sevenoaks and Plaxtol on A25. 3rd Thursday	
16	Surrey & Sussex	N. T. Walder, Old Park House, Ifield, Crawley		Star Inn, Rusper, Nr. Horsham. Last Friday	
17	Wiltshire, Dorset & Hampshire	D. J. Palmer, North Carolina, Quibo Lane, Weymouth		Hambro Arms, Milton Abbas, Dorset. 2nd Friday	
18	Devon, Cornwall & Somerset	J. C. Bugler, 3 Springfield Close, Elburton, Plymstock, Devon		To be arranged	
19	London			Coach & Horses, Hill St., W.1. 1st Thursday	

The Winter Magazine will appear in December 1970. All copy to be with the Editor by 1st November please.



# 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.

Send your enquiries to:

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