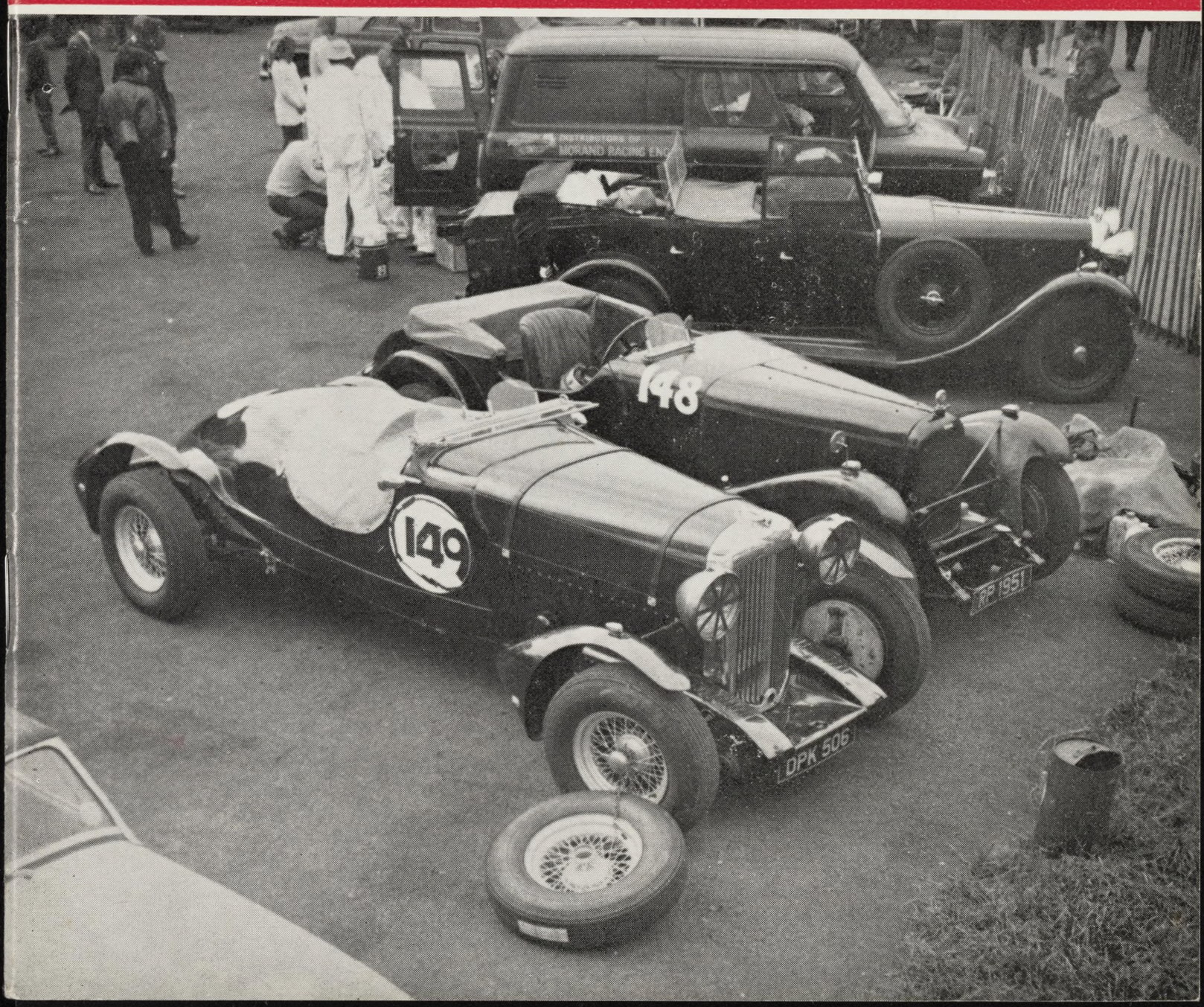
THE

Lagonda

THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 75 Winter 1971



THE Lagonda

MAGAZINE

Issue No. 75 **Winter 1971**

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CONTENTS

FRONT COVER: Paddock scene at B.D.C. meeting at Silverstone. Ted Townsley's new 4½-litre Special with Roy Paterson's Special.

NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Another year has come to a close and the Club can look back on a successful period of sporting and social events. It was significant that many newcomers to the Club scene were seen to be taking part and this trend is very encouraging. Let's hope it continues in 1972. Prices of Lagondas in the used car market continued to rise into the realms of make-believe. How the impecunious enthusiast can ever acquire a decently looked after Lagonda is difficult to see. His only choice seems to be to find a tatty car and renovate it gradually over a period of time. All very discouraging for the younger members.

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Plans are being made to run the postponed November Rally as a Spring Rally this year. The route is judged to be attractive and interesting by those Committee members who vetted the original arrangements. Perhaps running the Rally in the longer hours of daylight will prove an incentive to members. Watch the *Newsletter* for details.

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The Club Committee and Editorial Committee extend to all members at home and abroad very best wishes for happy and carefree motoring during 1972.

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The MIKE WILBY Memorial Appeal is meeting with a steady response from Club members and friends. This reminder will be the last published notice of the Appeal and anyone who has not yet contributed but would like to do so, should get in touch as soon as possible with the Club Treasurer.

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BOOK RECEIVED

"Land Speed Record" by Cyril Posthumus. 256 p.p. $9\frac{3}{8}'' \times 9\frac{1}{8}''$. Published by *Osprey Publications Ltd., P.O. Box* 25, 707 *Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire.* £4·00.

This book covers a story which began as long ago as 1898 when the first officially timed Land Speed Record for motor vehicles was recorded at 39.24 m.p.h. Sixty-one times since then the record has been broken until it currently stands at 630.388 m.p.h. The stories of the record breakers, together with those unsuccessful attempts, are told by Cyril Posthumus, that authoritative writer who needs no introduction from me. Osprey Publications have produced the book handsomely with many large format photographs supplemented by beautifully drawn full colour illustrations by Michael Roffe.

The quest for the Land Speed Record is followed over the years in great detail from the early racers in improbable machines through the aero-engined giants of the 20's and 30's; the epic attempts by John Cobb and Donald Campbell in more recent times; the advent of the pure jet and rocket propelled cars driven by thrust to the current holder, Gary Gabelich and his "Blue Flame". Finally the author deals with the conjecture on how fast man can eventually travel in a wheeled vehicle and still remain safely in contact with the ground. The sound barrier presents a formidible obstacle to overcome. That story is yet to be told. A.W.M.

From Bob Crane, our American representative, comes this photograph taken in Springfield, Ohio, where there the name Lagonda remains in vogue.

Alan Brown and Herb Schofield reflect on the latter's ten years' reign of terror in the North

NORTHERN NOTES

Herb Schofield

REFLECTIONS ON THE 1971 NORTHERN GYMKHANA. True to tradition the day proved to be very hot and very sunny and a number of members travelled long distances to attend, including Iain Macdonald and his LG.45 tourer from Newcastle.

We tend to take driving tests less seriously in the North nowadays, in contrast to our friends down South who co-promote with the Bentley Drivers' Club. Most of the Bentley boys take competition terribly seriously and of course have constructed special cars, far removed from the honest and sometimes very attractive cars made before the war—still we all take our pleasures in different ways.

We now stress greater emphasis on the social aspect of our meetings. A few pints of beer in the sunshine followed by gentle driving tests punctuated by frequent visits to the nearest wall, hedge or haystack. The tests invariably finish just about opening time, just in time to nip back in for a few more pints before departing with a monumental headache for home. Many thanks to John Broadbank and friends for organising once again.

* * * *

GENERAL NEWS. At this time of year (November) we don't hear much from our Yorkshire friends so please accept my apologies if all the news sounds a little local. Herb Schofield, David Hine, John Davenport, Alan Brown, Nigel Hall and Alistair Barker have moved into their very own premises to work on cars, and as they have fifteen between them there is always too much to be done. The garage has central heating, H. & C., a shower and even a "Club Room" kitted out with car seats—all very secluded and useful for a bit of "L.O." (anyone want that explaining please forward a stamped addressed envelope!).

After months of advertising Herb manages to get hold of an LG.6 Drophead, the ex Dr. Gale car which won the Club concours in 1965! Hugh Gasper moves down the social ladder to a modern Alvis. Alistair Barker buys a V.12 and a very lovely LG.45 tourer. Meanwhile over in Buxton Dennis Roberts parts with an LG.6 saloon which has stood outside his house for the past six years. Brian Green's M.45 rebuild nears completion and a beautiful car it will most certainly be. Lawton Warren suffers a mechanical setback in his 2-litre rebuild but still managed to look happy and wealthy at a recent pub meet. Doc Evans turned up at the October meeting—nice to see him again.

Harold Collins (061-330 1113) buys the ex Bill Summers V.12 Drophead which is nice to look at but not quite so nice to drive—yet. Nigel Hall gets married, to the intense relief of the back seat in my LG.6. He continues work on his LG.45 and LG.6 in between times (if you see what I mean).

Bill Allsager who already owns a V.12, LG.45 and a couple of David Brown cars buys the ex Hugh Howarth racing 4½-litre a car which was very well known in the years after the war, he intends to restore it. Alan Ogden completes a rebuild on his Rapier and unlike most of us then proceeds to use it for his daily motoring—well done.

We had a bit of a laugh up here when we saw Bob Alexanders' M.45 described as a standard car, not quite true as it does have an LG.45 engine, dressed out 16 in. wheels and a lowered body giving a total weight of about 25 cwt.—still with the weight of Bob on board I don't suppose it is much lighter than the standard tourer.

David Hine tears the V.12 Le Mans replica apart for some winter amusement and also buys a rather grotty M.45 saloon. Dearden-Briggs sells his lovely 1930 3-litre which is rather a shame, and over in Cheshire again Brian Minshull starts work on an LG.45 rebuild.

Finally the Northern Dinner and Dance, which is generally regarded by some as being the best event in the Club (by others as the most sickening and degrading) will be held once again at Monk Fryston Hall Hotel, Monk Fryston, on Friday, March 24th, 1972. Full details will of course follow in a later *Newsletter*, in the meantime pop the date in your diary and start saving up now.

Technical Topics

The Lagonda Rear Axle

With particular reference to the light assembly used on unsupercharged 2-litre and 16/80 models

The complete dismantling, cleaning and overhaul of the 2-litre back axle is a major operation, but it is not beyond the scope of the mechanically minded owner provided he has access to a bench vice and a reasonable kit of fitter's tools, and is prepared to improvise a few special items of equipment.

The complete differential unit can be withdrawn with the axle casting in situ but it is preferable to remove the entire axle from the chassis.

Assuming this is to be done, commence by jacking up the rear of the car and taking the weight on some firm blocks of sufficient height to ensure that the back wheels are at least three inches clear of the ground with the springs relaxed. The packing blocks should be placed under each side member of the frame just forward but clear of the rear spring front pivot mountings.

The wheels and brake drums should next be removed and the half shafts and hubs withdrawn. The latter can be withdrawn by removing six of the eight securing nuts. The bearing housing is slotted to clear the two remaining nuts and these should not be disturbed at this stage. The bearing housings will probably refuse to come away readily in which case they may be levered out; tyre levers are suitable for this purpose.

Note: *Axle Shafts complete with Bearing and Bearing Housing and Rudge Hub are conveniently withdrawn as one unit.*

Remove the nuts securing the spring U bolts, release the rear universal joint on the prop shaft by undoing six nuts and bolts and push the prop shaft as far forward as possible on its sliding joint. The exhaust pipe rear stay and the brake cable adjusting nuts should be undone.

Place jacks under each rear spring and withdraw a rear shackle pin on either side. The rear ends of the springs are now free and the jacks should be lowered and removed. The axle casing can now be lifted off the spring dowels, after removing the U bolts and plates, and slipped bodily backwards along the springs and lifted clear of the car. A second pair of hands will simplify this operation.

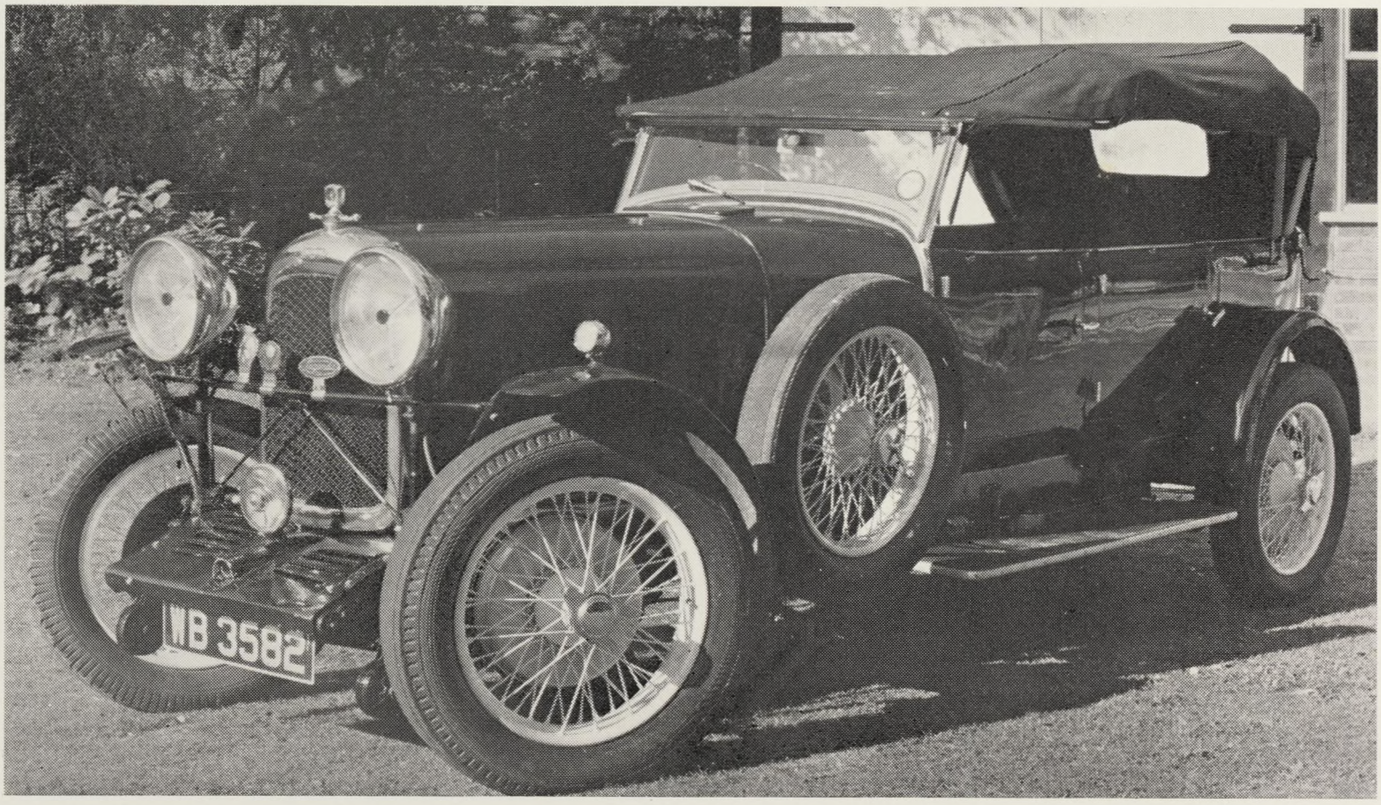
Now to start work on the axle. Clean off as much dirt as possible and, if not already done, remove the drain plug and run off the old oil. In cold weather it is a great help thoroughly to heat the axle casing by standing it in front of a gas or electric fire for an hour or so. Next remove the pinion housing by undoing the nuts securing it to the differential housing. On speed models the oil filler elbow will have to be removed to get at some of these nuts. Great care should be taken of the circular shims behind the pinion housing; it is advisable to count and make a note of their number.

The differential and crown wheel housing may now be removed from the banjo by undoing the twelve 5/16 in. nuts. A preliminary cleaning down of the separated parts is now indicated; unfortunately, if the correct castor base lubricant has been used it will not yield to the usual mineral solvents, e.g. petrol or paraffin. Genuine turpentine is a good solvent of castor oil but is now almost unobtainable; Methanol dope fuel is suitable and perhaps the third best is methylated spirits. Whichever is used should be liberally applied with pieces of rag which must be discarded as they become clogged with the old oil.

Note: *The fluid used by clothes cleaners (Trichlorethylene) is a good solvent of Castrol R.*

The ball races should next be examined for roughness and for wear; if the pinion shaft can be moved perceptibly endwise in its housing it must be stripped down completely in order that shims may be removed from between the inner races of the two thrust journals. The races need not be renewed, even though loose, provided they run smoothly. Proceed by removing the castellated nut securing the coupling flange to the tapered pinion shaft. Considerable pressure is required to separate the tape surfaces, use a pully drawer if available, otherwise drive wedges in between the flange boss and housing cover plate, at the same time striking the end of the taper shaft with a copper hammer.

Next the two large lock nuts must be removed from the pinion shaft. These are usually extremely tight and a stout ring spanner ($1\frac{7}{8}$ in. across flats) must be borrowed or made up. Bend open the tabs of the locking washer located between the two lock nuts and slip the ring spanner over the first nut. The problem of holding the pinion shaft from turning must now be tackled. Slip the coupling flange down on its taper, making sure that the key is in position and lightly screw on the castellated nut. The flange must now be held firmly and perhaps the best method is to bolt it on to a suitable piece of flat iron which in turn



A fine photographic study of a 3-litre *Photo: J. Holding*

should be gripped in the vice. Now to undo the lock nuts. Remember they have a right-handed thread, a four foot length of 2 in. pipe slipped over the end of the ring spanner may be necessary before sufficient leverage can be obtained.

If it is still obstinate, the nuts must be heated. An ordinary blow lamp may be used but if an oxy-acetylene torch is available this will enable the heat to be concentrated on the nuts before it spreads to the entire job. Having loosened the first nut the coupling flange must be removed in order to get the locking washer out of the way. The second nut is then tackled in a similar manner to its partner.

The pinion housing and cover should next be removed by taking out the twelve $\frac{1}{4}$ in. setscrews. The pinion shaft complete with thrust races may now be pressed from its housing. Obtain a short length of iron pipe of internal diameter slightly greater than the outside of the thrust races, slip this over the tapered end of the shaft and if the vice is large enough place the assembly between the jaws and press the pinion through the housing by screwing up the jaws. The pinion should be protected with a pad of copper or hardwood. If the vice will not accommodate the job the pinion may be driven through with a copper hammer or drift but care must be taken that the blows are directed on its centre and not on the ends of the teeth.

The thrust races may now be pulled off the pinion shaft taking careful note of the way they are fitted (sides marked "thrust" towards one another) and of the number and position of the spacer tubes and shims. If end play had been detected before dismantling, remove the shims one at a time from the inner races until there is zero clearance between the thrust races of the outer races and the large outer spacer tube.

Each time the races are reassembled to check this clearance the oil slinger must be replaced and one of the lock nuts pulled up dead tight using the coupling rig-up to hold the shaft. It is not necessary to press the shaft and thrust races back into the housing for this check up.

When a satisfactory adjustment has been achieved the shaft and races should be pressed back into their housing, taking great care that the rollers on the roller journal enter their outer race correctly. Should one catch up it will result in a damaged roller cage. Replace the end cover, pull up one of the lock nuts. Lightly lubricate with castor oil. The pinion shaft should now revolve smoothly but not freely enough to spin and there should be no perceptible end play. If all is satisfactory replace the tab washer and second lock nut making sure that both nuts are pulled down dead tight.

The crown wheel and differential assembly should now be examined; if wear has taken place in the diff. races, these may be adjusted provided the taper roller races are not rough. Wear in the crown wheel and pinion is best left well alone provided the teeth are not chipped, any attempt at bringing them closer into mesh will result in their mating on high spots which will make the axle noisy and possibly result in its early destruction.

The differential assembly is secured to the adaptor plate by split aluminium clamps held by four long bolts.

If it is desired only to adjust the bearings the nuts on these bolts should be loosened in turn. The bearings are held in steel housings which may be adjusted endwise by screwing them in or out of their securing rings, the housings and rings are prevented from turning by keep bolts and tab plates. Remove the tabs but leave their bolts in position to prevent the inner rings from turning. The adjustment may now be taken up by turning the housings alternately one notch at a time until there is no perceptible play but not enough to prevent the bearings from running freely.

If, however, the bearings require renewing or it is necessary to fit a new crown wheel, the long bolts should be withdrawn and the aluminium clamps removed noting how they come apart—they are usually marked by the makers. The differential assembly may now be removed from the adaptor plate taking great care not to turn the bearing housings on their adjusting rings until their position has been marked. This is essential if the setting of the crown wheel and pinion is to remain undisturbed.

It may be found that the bearing housings have been working loose in the aluminium clamps; this must be corrected by judicious removal of metal from the mating faces until they grip the housings firmly when bolted up.

To remove the inner races, a pulley draw will be required. The crown wheel is secured by eight bolts—removal of these bolts will allow the halves of the differential to be split revealing the sun and planet wheels.

If a new crown wheel and pinion is fitted these should be meshed until their is a very small but

just perceptible amount of play between them, about .0005 in. The crown wheel is adjusted sideways in the same way as for adjusting the differential bearings except that both bearings must be moved in the same direction. The pinion is adjusted by removing or inserting circular shims between the pinion housing and the adaptor plate.

Correct meshing must be effected by marking the pinion teeth with a thin smear of oil and red lead and then juggling with the above-mentioned adjustments until the red lead marking is transferred evenly along the full length of the crown wheel teeth.

The pinion housing must be bolted up firmly each time the parts are offered up.

Whilst the half shafts are withdrawn the opportunity should be taken to strip down and clean the brake pivot pins and cams. The so-called "oil-less" bushes should be cleaned and saturated in penetrating oil.

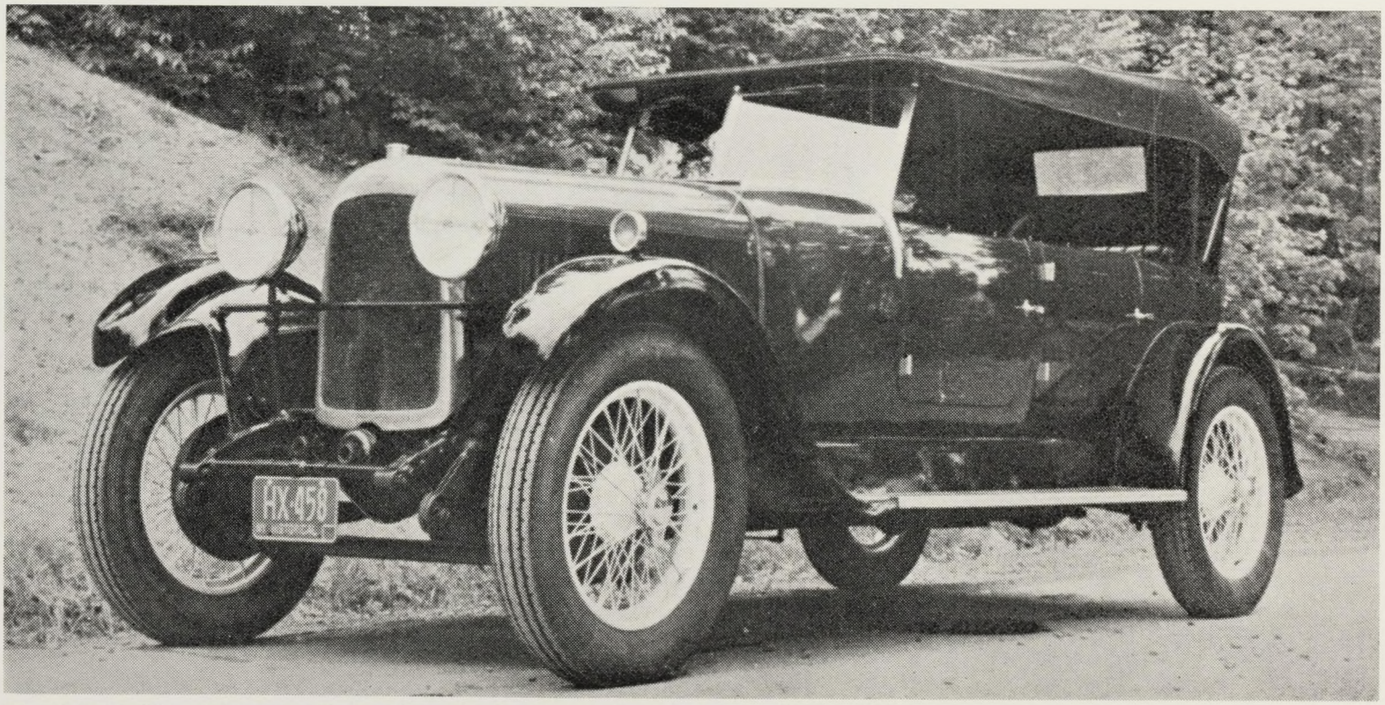
If the brake drums are badly scored they should be skimmed out, a large lathe is required for this and it will probably be best to entrust them to a firm specialising in this class of work.

If much metal has to be removed extra shims will be required on the ends of the shoes, the $\frac{1}{4}$ in. holes in the shoes may be slotted out with a round file to enable more than the normal maximum thickness of shims to be fitted. Shimming up the shoes in this manner is not the ideal way of taking up the clearance as the radius of the old linings will not be exactly the same as that of the skimmed out drums and frequent adjustment will be required until they bed-in.

The original internal diameter of the rear brake drums was $13\frac{3}{4}$ in. If they are now considerably oversize, and if new linings are to be fitted, it may be considered advantageous to compensate for wear by fitting aluminium strip of suitable thickness between the new linings and the shoes at the time of rivetting up. The thickness of the strip to be used may be arrived at by careful measurement of the present internal diameter of the drums. Subtract $13\frac{3}{4}$ in. and the extent of wear will be seen; divide by two and a figure of radial wear and thickness of packing will be obtained.

Practically all these rear axle assemblies were originally set up on Castrol R; this oil is of vegetable base and will not mix with mineral oils; considerable damage has been caused in past years by inadvertent or thoughtless mixing of oils of different bases. If an axle is to be completely stripped and rebuilt it may be thought wise to set it up on any modern extra pressure gear oil or SAE 140 rating, since it is doubtful if vegetable base oils have any virtue not now possessed by modern mineral oils. Vegetable oils are, in fact, still available, but they are expensive and have other disadvantages besides the hazard of inadvertent mixing.

I.F.



The 16/65 of Fred Rouse, Ithaca, New York. The only one known in the Club

FINMERE IN RETROSPECT

OFFICIALLY THIS EVENT BY THE LAGONDA AND Bentley Drivers Club was a driving test meeting, thoughtfully held on the day after V.S.C.C. 'July Silverstone', so first come details of the tests and Lagonda performances, on Sunday, 25th July.

Test 1. Forward right-hander, stop with front n/s wheel in circle, reverse opposite lock along bigger curve, stop longitudinally astride. Alan Brown is reputed to be faster at going backward than coming forward—now work out your own terminology if you know his performance at the annual prizegiving; at any rate Alan in his 2-litre was fastest here, Roy Paterson in El Relicario second.

Test 2. Forward chicane to round a marker and return via same chicane to stop astride. M. D. Tomlin and Doc Young tie for first, 4½ and 3½-litres respectively.

Test 3. Twice perform a forward, sidestep, and reverse; stop astride. More equal firsts, this time both 4½ mounted, D. S. Johnson in the Le Mans Actual, and D. C. Mahony.

Test 4. Forward into and forward out of sizeable garage to stop astride. Tomlin first again; and Doc Young another equal place, this time sharing second with Witt Wittridge, 4½.

Test 5. Forward into smaller garage, reverse out and round marker continuing reverse into same garage, forward out to stop astride. Honours shared yet again, this time Colin Bugler in the 2-litre he has had twelve years or more, and Herbert Schofield in his Le Mans Replica.

Test 6. Longest and most complicated; a combination of chicanery, wiggle-wogglery, and garaging. The first driver to pioneer a new quick route received spontaneous applause from the crowd, then realized he'd stopped astride instead of going over. (Must be like some reporters who, once started, are never sure when to finish!) So the fastest was Young, and second, Brown. Incidentally recorded times were from 33.2 to 78.4 secs.

Regular Finmere supporters will notice that the old set of tests has become worn out after years of service, and this was a complete brand-new issue. The mimeographed Instructions and Details of Tests were below the standard not only of our esteemed magazine and the clinically hygienic black and white B.D.C. (*The Times* sponsored) Silverstone programme of course, but also not as glossy as the exciting free black and red Sandtoft Tests booklet backed by Messrs. Broadbank and Rowntree. However, the Lagondas and Bentleys, competing and supporting, must have been the most polished gathering in the country.

Our cars included the ancient incredible 11.9 h.p. driven by Freda Roberts; 2, 3½ and 4½ straights, and magnificent V-twelves . . . and what other make can compare with that? All were interesting and presentable, most were immaculate, and some were absolutely *Concours d'Elegance*. The Le Mans Actual Winner, BPK 202, and the Le Mans Replica, both in red, made an admirable pair, the latter now looking more expensive than the former. Amongst other cars I recall were the West Midlands team of H. L. Buckton's large white drophead with vertical boot, the substantial well-finished special driven by Tomlin, and the V.12 driven by L. F. Dance; there were Alan Elliott's standard 2-litre Schnauferl and Wittridge's special 4½ Schnauferl tourers looking no worse for their continental tours; and the LG.6 drophead of the Chief Marshall, which had been observed on the outside of Copse Corner the day before.

The competing drivers varied in age and experience from the quite new members to half a dozen veterans of the pre-1960 Register, with the majority in between. I hope they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. J. K. Butler had recently returned from darkest Africa where he had unearthed his M.45. He considered he got it "very reasonably" and I suspect he brought it home to enjoy itself among its fellows. This car had also been noticed the day before, at the medical post covering Woodcote Corner.

The marshals seemed sufficient in number to enable them to have some time off despite John Turner heading only a depleted team of his young ladies. On one startline a driver remarked that he was sorry to say the previous year he had nearly run over a marshal and he hoped it would not happen again. Immediately the starter assured him it would not: he had been the marshal! Bob Davy was in command as Chief Marshal complete with walkie talkie radio. When a certain team-captain walked on to the track to brief his waiting drivers he was politely asked to return to the spectator area. Thinking there might be a radio link with the police, he went quietly. And when the Hermes staff photographer went across the track to get the sun behind him, he found

Roy Paterson and Ian North reflect on the former's ten years' reign of terror in the North-East

Bob was soon behind him and moving him off. Otherwise there might have been more picture coverage. The police did pay us a visit or two. It is not known whether they had been called in by Bob, were looking for suspicious characters, admiring the cars or the fashions, or checking up that everyone had a pass and was a *bona fide* Club member before being allowed to join the beer queue. There had been a slight mix-up on the signing-in sheet over Paterson-Lag and Pattison-Bent, but the officials soon solved that one. Then again, one unlucky B.D.C. member and an even unluckier Lagonda driver were actually penalised (150 and 350 points respectively) for being late, an unheard of occurrence at a Sandtoft meeting. All in all the conduct of the meeting must have brought joy to the heart of any Blue-book carrying R.A.C. Steward, together with his recommendation for an honorary life membership.

Another late arrival was entrant Iain Macdonald, but he got away with it being, alas, without his new $4\frac{1}{2}$ special. He is believed to have walked; he declined an invitation to perform the tests on foot.

The tests may be the official reason for Finmere but it is the social occasion which is the real attraction, a get-together of two very distinguished companies; licensed refreshments discreetly available. Somehow Pattison-Bent and Paterson-Lag never met; a pity. The former might have bought the other a drink. Come to think of it the aforementioned marshal-chaser might have bought his victim a drink if he had thought a bit more quickly. Some notable Lagonda entrants from previous meetings were regrettably absent, thus there was rather less free technical advice than usual and spare parts were not so readily available. Yet again the traditional Finmere weather was matched by the optional dress, shorts for the men and suntops for the young ladies, both sexes displaying suitable areas of healthy-looking suntan. Our editor of ten years ago, Adrian Whitelegge, was circulating amongst old friends but not having handy a notebook or a ballpoint (such as that belonging to David Hine's doctor friend) he must no longer be in the business. Peter Loe, apart from helping to organise it all, spent most of his time trying to meet every competitor to give a word of encour-

agement, which was much appreciated. A splendid debut on his new appointment. He knew how they felt because he competed last year.

The need did not arise for your reporter to visit the small distant tents himself, but a female who did confided to Ian North that they were much better than before, little knowing that it was he who put them up last year. That was on his arriving extremely early and being manoeuvred into it after a thirty second demonstration of how to do it by no less a person than the Chairman himself. No doubt this year's volunteers have already made sure of next season's toilet contract. There were not so many in the Hermes party this time and Ian purposely brought them later in the morning. They thank Mary for providing them with a good H.Q., safe-deposit, larder, and cellar. They were augmented by the Schofield contingent and an inspiring sight they made that sunny morn as they burbled along the rural Bucks lanes and through the county town in a close-knit convoy of four open Lagondas and three support cars. They had been galvanised into action at their Northants pub when the driver of a pure vintage Bentley—some said 6½—stopped opposite and called across that it was time they were moving if they did not wish to be late. (He must have been forewarned about those severe penalties.) Thank you sir, Mr. Nutter. They just made it.

Results

Men driving vintage Bentleys were in the first three places overall, fourth being Ann Shoosmith in her post-war Bentley special. Places 5-12 went to Bentley men. Their specials seem to be specifically constructed to withstand the fiercest of handling and even their more standard cars have amazingly tight turning circles for being such massive machines.

Thirteen, and lucky for some-one, the highest Lagonda driver, a surprised Roy Paterson who just beat M. D. Tomlin by six tenths of a point. Third, fourth and fifth Lagondas were Ian North, Doc Young and Alan Brown, and the Lagonda team award went to those in first, third, and fifth places.

	Class I	*Class II*	*Class III*	*Team*
1st	Brown	Paterson	Weatheritt	Paterson
2nd	Bugler	Tomlin	Dance	North
3rd	Elliott	North	MacMurdy	Brown

Now your indulgence kind readers, forgive me please, but this paragraph just has to be. Consider this range of Lagondas for manoeuvrability and/or performance: Rapier, 2-litre, 16/80, 3½-litre, M.45, M.45R, LG.45, and V.12; similarly for the B.D.C.: vintage 3, 4½ and 6½-litre, Speed Six, and 8-litre; 4¼ Derby; also post-war Mk. 6, S.1 Continental and S.2 models Why consider? Because, ladies and gentlemen, somewhere along the tests, each and every model listed was beaten by a standard model, albeit with obviously a non-standard driver who is my respectful nomination for this year's Thompson Trophy award (*vide* Magazine number 36, p.15, (i) x), our own Freda Roberts and her repeat incredible 11.9 h.p. now enjoying its fiftieth summer. The only Lagondas not beaten were those of North, Paterson and Young.

The numbers of starters were both up a little at 21 Lagonda and 35 Bentley. There were no casualties of course, and everyone finished. So the tests are far from being devised to wreck the cars, as some people imagine.

Suggestions

Nevertheless in all honesty I can understand the feelings of some owners who hesitate to subject their beautiful long-serving Lagondas to compete with the split-second stopwatch. Surely the obvious pride they have in their vehicles could be expressed competitively in some other way. Perhaps in precision-handling tests not against the watch, but against the tape-measure: stopping nearest to but without touching tall posts placed ahead and/or astern, parking first go at specified distances from kerbstones, delicately operating seesaws to raise filled beakers without spilling them, freewheeling to certain marks, passing between posts, or even walking alongside their well-lubricated cars while steering them to a given "home" at the same time avoiding one or two strategically placed harmless obstacles en route. Henry Coates and Ted and Eleanor Townsley know plenty of these. Such a programme might induce entries from many new competitors, especially if the morning were given to the high-performance-brigade, and the afternoon devoted to the precision-handling exponents for their enjoyment. As parking space was at a premium this year my own impression is that we had more spectators. Maybe some of them would compete in a future non-timed programme.

Magazine space is also at a premium so no disrespect to our many Bentley friends for the paucity of their mention. We enjoyed their

company and competition and they brought some fascinating cars with them. We hope they will continue to come.

The tests themselves should be made more encouraging by spacing the bollards so that it is not only the drivers of long-wheelbase cars who are handicapped. Either no cars or all cars should be able to "do it in one".

Perhaps more use might be made of the public address system to keep everyone informed of times, which were displayed in the caravan windows with the usual alacrity thank you, and the more famous cars.

Regardless of all the above, it was a jolly good day to end a grand weekend. When I report that the northerners in their open cars found their homeward way illuminated by lightning flashes and watered by torrential rain—and with only an anorak hood for protection—and still consider the weekend to be time and money well spent, then you will understand what I mean.

In closing now, I take the liberty of offering the powers that be my final suggestion. More warning for the overworked and underpaid reporting staff!

"HERMES"

HULL and EAST RIDING MEMBERS NOTES

ONE OF OUR RECENT PUB MEETS WAS FAVOURED by the attendance of three Lagondas, all 4½-litre models. *El Relicario* was one.

The second car was featured on page 6 of the *Guardian* ("Motoring and Women") one Monday early in 1962, and the family thereafter named it "The (Guardian) Angel". So it proved to be when it saved a subsequent owner and his family from personal injury in a bad-weather collision. John Beardow is the present owner.

The third Lagonda, a newcomer as yet unnamed, was the M.45R DHC which Jack Allison had intended to rebuild. After his untimely death it passed via Henry Coates to John Broadbank, who completed it with a non-drophead body, tried it, and entered it for the November Handicap in 1963. Unluckily, two days before the event he had a sudden engine trouble and had to be towed away from the car park of a Methodist church. (He did the Handicap in a modern.) At the start of the 1964 season his special was out again, but after a few months of service it needed a tow-start. It gave an almighty back-fire and promptly disintegrated part of its exhaust system. John decided this was not good enough—and anyway his Mk. One body had not appealed to his professional artistic eye. No one saw the car for years. Now it is motoring again with much different new body; and an old engine which was originally in "The Angel" when it came up north, and which was taken out at Henry's Hill Farm workshops.

Henry chose to appear at the meeting in his present Swine Workshops Utility model with SWU 1 numberplate, a spotless white Aston Martin DB4.

We are fortunate to have a Lagonda sympathiser in Peter Adamson. Besides coming along to our pub meetings he invited us to a special personally conducted tour of Hull's Transport Museum, followed by a shuttle service of rides to the Victoria Pier. Appropriately enough the transport he provided was his particular pride and joy, a capacious four-wheeler even older than the Lagonda tricar, a 19th-century Lanchester. The sun was shining. There can't be many of the pub meets with a professional museum executive on tap as it were, and we shall remain extremely grateful to him.

Transport Cafe Confidential

A quite spontaneous springtime motoring scene; it really did happen.

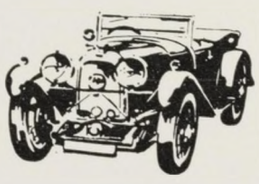
First Lagonda traveller—having left wife and G.C.E. son at home—A plate of everything please, and (eyeing miniskirt) what time do you finish tonight my love?

Second Lagonda traveller: The same for me please and (eyeing second miniskirt behind the partition) is your friend also coming out tonight?

First ditto—indicating third ditto just a little older than himself and a bachelor to boot—And what about our friend here?

Mini number one (Eyeing him up and down rather discomfortingly): Him? Oh, he can have my mum!

"HERMES"



Facelift for a Lady

by Carmencita Johnson Taylor

"LADIES SHOULD NOT OWN LAGONDAS." SO SPOKE Ivon Foreshaw at one of the A.G.M.'s at Overstone. I have often pondered on this and wondered what he meant! But anyway I hope he and others will look kindly on my little description of the renovation I had done to my very precious 1934 M.45 AXU 775. It was that old devil rust really—after thirty-seven years it was no longer possible to "rub down" or "patch up" parts of the two front wings. A major operation was necessary. So she was taken to two keen and excellent chaps. Messrs. Furness and Farthing of Norwich whose procedure was as follows and is illustrated by the photograph which was taken by Mick Furness.

The hood, all trimmings and the radiator were removed. Most of the offside wing and parts of the nearside wing together with both running boards were cut out. These were renewed using 18 G.A. steel which was welded in using an A.G.A. Mig 200 Argon/co2 welder, the welds being covered with body solder. The edge of the wings was rolled with $\frac{1}{4}$ in. rod giving added strength and as was originally built. The curves of the wings were braced with four $\frac{5}{8}$ steel bars about eighteen inches apart, making a really firm and stable job.

New stone guards were fitted. The underside of the wings were undersealed, also both sides of the stoneguards. The front end of the stoneguards were sealed to prevent splashing running down between the stoneguard and the wing. This front sealing was thought to be an improvement on the original and a safeguard for the future.

The running boards were shaped on the bench and the curves welded to the wings. And these were covered with rubber matting and edged with aluminium strip.

The radiator shell was rechromed, the shutters being so good it was not considered necessary to do these. Both the petrol and radiator caps, P.100 headlamps were rechromed and all four hubcaps. The original chrome on the windscreen was so good that it was not necessary to rechrome. Which demonstrates the superb quality and workmanship of the 1930's.

All repaired parts of the bodywork were primed with red oxide and rubbed down. The repaired parts were sprayed with five coats of primer and the paint work "cut in". An overall spray of five coats of British Racing Green was then given.

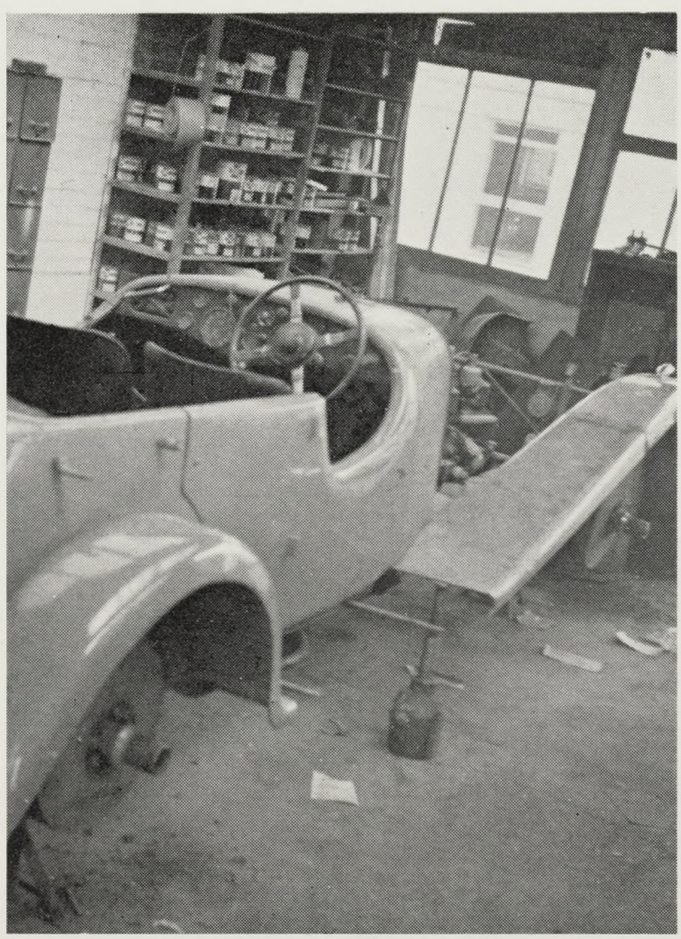
The wheels were prepared after shot blasting and finished in Embassy Maroon.

The radiator was replaced and fitted with new spout casting to radiator header tank. The mould for these being specially made. The firm has been persuaded to keep this mould. So if any Lag owner needs a spout casting I can put them in touch.

I was advised to wait six weeks for the paint to harden before giving her a wax polish. I have been very pleased with this "face-lift" to the M.45 and delighted with the thorough and painstaking way the work was carried out. It is good to know also that one CAN still find people interested and prepared to take so much trouble. I paid with a smile—Yes, I did really.

* * * *

This photograph shows the section of new wing welded in place



"Let's get the D.B.'s Rollin'"

WELL NO ONE CAN SAY WE DID NOT TRY. IT WAS our 21st and we were all being asked to make it a bumper year but by chance, instead of going off to that Spring Social, I was invited up to the Crystal Palace to the Alvis Day and that is where it started.

All those wonderful cars, from 12/40 and 12/50 to 1963 3-litres. For this, their 16th National Day, they especially featured the Graber, both in the Concours and the Cavalcade. As a D.B.2.6 Lagonda owner it started a line of thought which took me to Finmere, Silverstone and that letter to D.B. owners, prompted, not a little, by one Peter Loe.

Coming away from the Palace I was already committed to the driving test and went over lap times, the Silverstone Club Circuit and performance improvements with an idea of compensating at the B.D.C. meeting in September.

Now the driving test regs said ". . . to sign on not later than 10.30 a.m." and the drive from Dulwich to Finmere is a fair way of a tidy bit, so I had to leave by 8.30 a.m. at the latest.

Have you ever tried to get three women into your Lagonda by 8.30 a.m.? I can tell you it just cannot be done. 9 a.m. yes but 8.30 no. So we left late and from Streatham, Tooting, Morden and all points west all, not just one or two, but all traffic lights were red with only one not, Lagonda backing over the pads to get them to change. Then at last the open road or rather the slow lane of the M.4 with a small Ford Popular at 29 m.p.h. in front and the other lanes closed whilst they erected crash barriers on the central reservation. At last, long last, Oxford and 30 m.p.h. left a free road, a 6½-litre Bentley in front and a 4½ behind and a good, fast drive into Tingewick where, to all our surprises, we all drove around without knowing where to go next. At last the chap in front asked—the rest of us just sat in our cars and waited. When he moved, we moved, sharp right, up the hill turn left and low the airfield.

It was just 10.35 and having parked I made a short dash to control to sign on, get a list of other cars and my number. I got back to the car in time to see my three ladies leaving the runway the way we came in. Well they had been in the car all of two hours and the loos had not turned up so it meant a quick walk back to the village.

Now I had a boot full of stuff, seats, food, drink, raincoats, bags; in fact the lot. I got the hood down on my own and the cover on, checked the water and oil, went over the regs. again and went down to the gate to see if the women were returning. No. So a quick cup of tea out of the flask and the Lags. were being called to the line.

I just had time to chat to Peter Loe about his 2.6 and its compression in the sump, bowed to David Hine so he could sweep past in the Le Mans Replica and drove up the side road to the top of the runway to take my place behind Freda Roberts in the 11.9 h.p.

The first test was not hard with the hood down so you could see where you were heading backwards, off the line and a righthand sweep to park the front n/s wheel in a circle, except having watched Freda, I followed and put my offside wheel in. Then backwards, passing a line of pylons on the nearside and stopping the car with the finish line down the middle. A fast time but mucked up so on to Test 2.

Through a chicane, around a marker, back through the chicane and stop astride the start/finish line. Easy, till you got to the start line when those markers all looked like T.V. aerials sticking up out of the runway and it's not till you get started and pass the front two you can see the next pair, lots of work on the tiller, full left then right lock, out to the marker, around on full right lock and back again stopping hard across the line.

By now it had stopped being a game and a bit of fun, I had settled in and even if I could not get her off the line fast, because of the lack of power at the bottom end and additional weight, I could swing her freely between the markers, so we moved to Test 3. Four lines of markers up and down which you had to drive twice forward and twice backwards.

Off the line a little better this test and into 2nd before the end of the first, left hand lane, pass the markers at the end, over to the right, break, reverse and back on the wing mirrors, to do the same at the other end. Then up, forward and back, reversing over the start/finish line astride. Not a good nor a bad time but that was due to, in part, reverse jumping out, at speed, when "lifting off" at the end of chicanes.

That finished the first run at the first three tests

and back we went to the car park to talk it over.

By now my women had returned from the village and two groups of friends had turned up as well so I felt having got eleven people there I had done all I could in this our 21st year. I just had time to have a beer, get the rad. down to 52°C. before being called to the line to do the first 3 for the second time. Here I did remember to get the nearside front wheel on the circle in the first test. But this did change the approach on the line of markers at the finish and a double shuffle had to be done to get the car astride the line without knocking down a marker. Test 2 did not look a mass of markers the second time and on Test 3 I had to hold the gear lever in reverse at the end of each chicane. And so to lunch. At last I got all the clobber out of the boot and feeling on top of the world had a good meal with my friends on the straw bales. Then we waited for the second, and waited, and waited. Little snags do crop up at these dos and I could see the chairman and the then, assistant competition secretary moving markers and painting lines like mad so decided to, in true fashion, "walk the course".

Test 4. "The Garage" was not a three point turn or "rather swing" affair but a full lock, right hand turn. Test 5 a further garage was an "in, back out, round marker, back in, stop and drive out over the start/finish line. Test 6 the old "chicane, wiggle woggle out and back and drive into a garage. But, and it's a big but, one could not get through the second marker unless you over swung the first and second on the way out and did the same after you had turned around the end marker. Then the sweep past the end of these markers on full right lock and into the garage to stop with the back wheels over the line.

By the time I got back to the car park they were calling the cars to the line so I started up, pulled up the rad. blind to a quick warm up and rolled up the runway to the far end, did a couple of sharp right lock turns to get the feel of an empty boot and turned back to find my place in the line of cars, behind Freda for a little chat before getting on to the line for Test 4. As I said it was a case of straight in, hard right lock and out over the line and a fair time too, as now I could get the back end to slide a little. On to Test 5, as the line of cars moved a little faster on these two than the others and here trouble in getting into reverse and a lot of it in, having come out of the garage backwards and gone around the marker on right lock, getting the car straightened up from that 180 degree swing—backwards—very hard, to fight against that force and line the car up, in the wing mirror, to get it back into the garage. No better on the second run either and so on to the last.

First left, then right, left, right, left, then turn around the end marker and then the same half way back and a good right sweep into the garage —not a good time but no markers down and on the second run, too tight a turn on the left turn after the end marker and I had to stop, reverse and look over, to get round. So that was over and I could not remember when I had enjoyed myself with my car so much as on this day.

We moved back into the car park to have tea, repack the boot, put up the hood and, as our friends had to get away, homework and school for the kids in the morning, we moved off without going down to the inn for supper. We did call in at Oxford on the way for a snack and got back home, happy, sunburnt and relaxed about 6.45 p.m.

Talking about it during the evening, I began to wonder where I had been. All of my crowd had seen all the cars compete. Apart from that wonderful 11.9 h.p. in front and David Hine's V.12 behind I knew of no others, as no doubt the reader will see from the above and when Peter Loe asked if I could "write it up"? I had to say no, as, and one can see now, I could not cover all the many other happenings that occurred during the day.

However, two 2.6 D.B. cars took part and the seal was set for us to, not only parade at Silverstone but to enter and race there the following month. This is another story which I hope I will be allowed to tell at some later date, but, in the meantime, I hope that in 1972 the Club will see more and more David Brown cars taking part in these events.

We will all be very pleased to see you. On this you may be assured.

J.M.M.

ARTICLES OF GENERAL INTEREST OR OF PARTICULAR MECHANICAL CONTENT ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THE MAGAZINE PLEASE. EDITOR.

The Autocar Road Tests

4½-LITRE LAGONDA RAPIDE M.45 TOURER

No. 939. (Post-War Series)

A 100 m.p.h. Maximum, in Terms of Road Use, Means Wonderfully Easy Cruising Speeds and Brilliant Acceleration. Comfort and Very Complete Equipment.

IN SPITE OF THE INCREASING PERFORMANCE OF cars generally, there remains something altogether out of the ordinary about a machine capable of a genuine 100 m.p.h. in production form. Those who have had much to do with the faster cars sold in the past, and particularly anyone who has encountered exaggerated claims sometimes put forward in regard to speed, know how difficult of attainment is a full 100 on a car with a touring body, wings, lamps, hood, all-weather equipment, and all the other paraphernalia of a car fit for really comfortable use on the road.

The Rapide model Lagonda, it will be remembered, was brought out as a development of the normal 4½-litre—itself a very fast car. It has a shorter wheelbase chassis, a modified engine, and other changes made with a view to increasing the performance; and, whilst not sold necessarily with a guarantee of any particular speed, the magic figure of 100 m.p.h. has been an aim of those responsible for it.

This it has achieved on test as the best speed over a measured half-mile at Brooklands, and a fine performance it is. Wind was not kind to the car.

When it comes to road use the possession of a 100 m.p.h. maximum is apt to be misunderstood. Those with experience of driving fast are aware how singularly few are the occasions when anything like as high a speed as this is attainable; the whole point is the really remarkable acceleration and high cruising speeds that go with it.

Because there is so much in reserve 60 m.p.h. is but an ambling speed. It is a wonderfully satisfactory experience to be propelled in a quiet, smooth-running car with the throttle scarcely open and the speedometer showing a steady 60, in the knowledge that, on a suitable road, depressing the pedal will send the needle soaring into the eighties easily and swiftly without fuss or roar or sense of stress.

The car has charm besides sheer performance, and this is where much of its real appeal lies. It may appear curious, and unexpected to some people, that at times it is remarkably pleasant to drive this car at 35 to 40 m.p.h., hardly a sound coming from the mechanism, the driver satisfied because he knows that instant acceleration is available, and that, should he choose to utilise the great reserve of power, few other cars on the road can be his equal. The acceleration test figures in the table deserve examination; they are quite exceptional as a whole.

The lower speed behaviour of this Lagonda cannot be too highly stressed. It is so quiet, so flexible, and able to be largely a top-gear vehicle when that kind of driving appeals. The top-gear acceleration would, indeed, be hard to better in the middle and higher ranges of speed. Long gradients are taken accelerating fast all the way, and even from a crawl the engine will pick up without a change down being made, it then being necessary to retard the ignition by the hand control to check pinking in view of the fairly high compression ratio.

Little gear changing is actually necessary; in getting away from rest second can be engaged almost at once, and as a variation the lever can then be put straight into top gear position at about 20 m.p.h. On the other hand, if the close and high indirect ratios are used, extraordinary results are produced, for a genuine 70 m.p.h. can be run up to on third without stressing the engine, 45 or so on second.

These gears are quiet—third, in fact, being indistinguishable from top. The change, with a right-hand lever, has not any mechanism for assisting the movements, but the lever is beautifully balanced, the clutch action is light, and with perfectly normal double-clutching methods clean and certain changes are made.

It is a very different gear change to handle from that on Lagonda cars of a few years ago. The change between top and third is particularly satisfactory. The drop down to second remains as the one change calling for judgment, but there are few occasions when a gear lower than third is needed at speeds much above 20 m.p.h. A quite considerable gradient approached slowly of necessity round a corner is taken fast on third.

The supreme ease of the car's behaviour, which is its most strongly marked quality, is due to an adequate power output from the engine and to

the use of high gear ratios. Seldom in ordinary running is the rev counter needle showing much above 2,500 r.p.m., and this means that the engine is scarcely working at all, for 3,800 to 4,000 is its safe limit. It is noticed that 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear corresponds to approximately 28 m.p.h., so that at 3,000, a moderate engine speed, the car is really moving.

The exhaust has been given a distinct and somehow pleasingly hard note which rises to a peak at about 2,000 r.p.m., but is not conspicuous above or below that speed to the occupants; and whether the car be handled noisily or not is more than usually in the driver's own hands. The only real trace of the engine mechanically is on the over-run from the higher speeds, when it can be felt to some slight extent; it is a refined and smooth-running unit for all its power.

The average that can be put up is a measure chiefly of road and traffic conditions and of the way in which the driver chooses to handle the car, owing to the swift acceleration and the speed being maintained almost irrespective of gradient on a main road.

When the Lagonda was being timed to do 100.56 m.p.h. over a half-mile at Brooklands, the speedometer's highest reading was 103; at 60 the instrument read fast by fractionally more than 2 m.p.h., at 40 by only 0.8 m.p.h., and at 30 by only 0.25 m.p.h. The timed speeds given in the table were taken with the main windscreen folded down and two people on board. With the main screen raised normally the mean timed speed over a half-mile was 93.26 m.p.h., and the best speed 96.25 m.p.h., and the speedometer did not go above an exact reading of 100.

The controls of a car of this kind are all-important, for if they do not do their work accurately the performance cannot be used with any degree of enjoyment. The Rapide has steering which creates confidence throughout the range of speed. It is fairly high geared, so that in manoeuvring and taking sharp turns at low speed a fair amount of effort is needed, but becomes lighter when travelling fast, is self-centring to just the right extent, and gives the essential feeling of immediate control over the machine.

This car feels an entity, solid but not "dead", which can be directed as the driver desires without giving evidence of having a will of its own, and control over the suspension to afford maximum tightness for fast work or softness at other times is given by the fitting to both axles of hand-controlled Telecontrol as well as big hydraulic shock absorbers.

Girling brakes are fitted, and are a light-acting kind of brake, which gives little indication of their true power until one comes to put fair pressure on the pedal. Then they provide excellent emergency stopping results, whilst in ordinary use they are smooth and progressive in the best possible way. The hand lever is exceedingly well placed, and, being of fly-off pattern, can be used as an alternative to the pedal, whilst it is very certain in restarting on a gradient.

This latest pattern of the open model Rapide that has been tested, and driven some 500 miles, incorporated additional and altered points introduced in the normal course of development as compared with the original examples of this model, some of these being features which could be supplied if required on existing cars.

The body of this particular car has a different tail, neater and clean-swept, the spare wheel being out of sight, carried horizontally in a locker separate from another locker above. Built into the sloping rear panel is an internally illuminated number plate, which also embodies the tail lamp, stop lamp, and a reversing light.

It has been possible on this car to reduce weight, and the head-lamp system has been rearranged, two comparatively small lamps being fitted, in conjunction with a third central lamp; the off-side and the centre lamps have independent switches. The windscreen used, whilst still affording full protection, also offers less head resistance, and the wings are of an improved shape to the same end. There is no longer a free wheel.

All the occupants definitely sit within the car, the driver finds that his right arm naturally comes inside the door, extremely comfortable seats with pneumatic upholstery are used, and the equipment is remarkably complete. The driving position is excellent, neither too high nor too low, and, in spite of a long bonnet, the edge of the near-side wing is visible, as well as a good view of the off-side wing. The view in the driving mirror could well be improved.

An excellent feature is the carrying of the side screens in the doors, where they are easily reached by undoing quick-action fasteners, and when raised these give full protection and do not rattle. The hood disappears into the body, and is neat when both raised and lowered. There are four-wheel jacks, operated hydraulically, allowing all four wheels, or front and rear wheels separately,

to be raised.

Lagonda cars have long been good for the under-bonnet arrangements. The engine has a clean finish, with the auxiliaries neatly and sensibly arranged.

The engine is a ready starter, and gains temperature quickly, there being a thermostat to operate radiator shutters. There are many useful and practical points of equipment, too numerous to detail.

The car was provided for test by the London and Home Counties distributors, Warwick Wright, Ltd.

Reprinted from the *Autocar*, April 26th, 1935 by kind permission.

4½-LITRE LAGONDA RAPIDE TOURER

DATA FOR THE DRIVER

PRICE, with open four-seater body, £1,000. Tax, £22 10s.
RATING: 29.13 h.p., six cylinders, o.h.v., 88.5 × 120.64 mm., 4,467 c.c.
WEIGHT, without passengers, 33 cwt. 19 lb.
TYRE SIZE: 5.50 × 19 in. on knock-off wire wheels.
LIGHTING SET: 12-volt; automatic voltage control.
TANK CAPACITY: 20 gallons; fuel consumption, 15 m.p.g.
TURNING CIRCLE: (L) 41 ft.; (R) 43 ft.
GROUND CLEARANCE: 7 in.

ACCELERATION

Overall gear ratios	From steady m.p.h. of 10 to 30	20 to 40	30 to 50
3.31 to 1	10.2/5 sec.	7.4/5 sec.	8.4/5 sec.
4.23 to 1	6.4/5 sec.	5.4/5 sec.	6.2/5 sec.
6.65 to 1	4.1/5 sec.	3.4/5 sec.	4.3/5 sec.
10.38 to 1	3 sec.	—	—

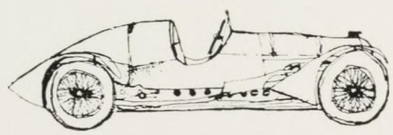
From rest to 50 m.p.h. through gears, 9.2/5 sec.
From rest to 60 m.p.h. through gears, 14.3/5 sec.
From rest to 70 m.p.h. through gears, 21 sec.
25 yards of 1 in 5 gradient from rest, 4.2/5 sec.

SPEED

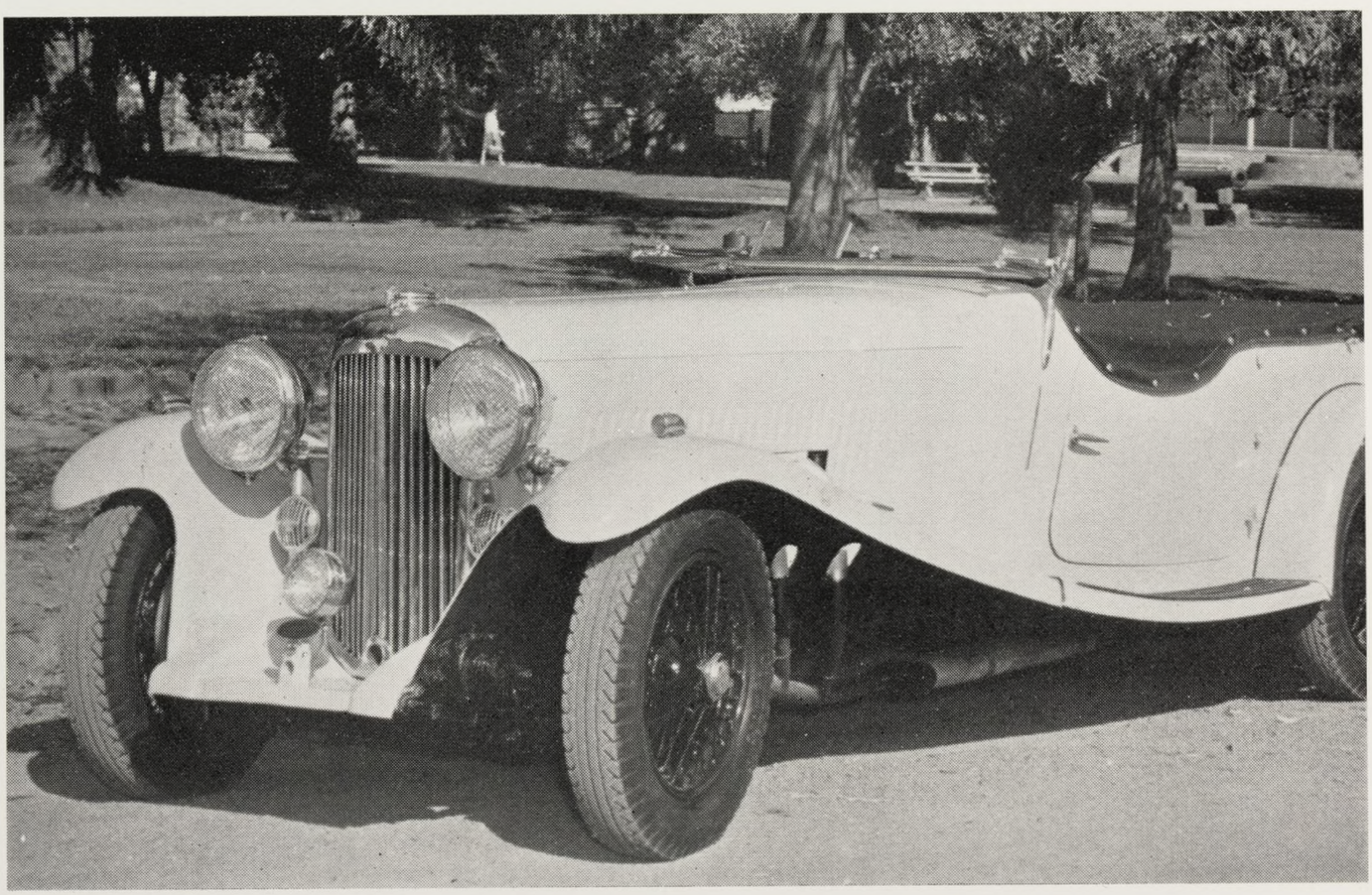
	m.p.h.
Mean maximum timed speed over ½ mile ..	98.36
Best timed speed over ½ mile	100.56
Speeds attainable on indirect gears—	
1st	33
2nd	45.52
3rd	70.78
Speed from rest up 1 in 5 Test Hill (on first gear)	24.51

Performance figures of acceleration and maximum speed are the means of several runs in opposite directions.

(*Described in "The Autocar" of September 21st*, 1934)



An M.45 Rapide rebuilt by B. J. Govan Smith



Lagondas in the 1934 T.T.

by L. S. Michael

THE STORY OF THE 1934 T.T. IS WELL-KNOWN. IT was won on handicap by C. J. P. Dodson in a 1,287 c.c. M.G. Magnette with Hall's 3½-litre "Rolls" Bentley second, Fotheringham's 1½-litre Aston Martin third, and Lagondas 4th, 5th and 8th. Although the duel between Brian Lewis in No. 1 Lagonda and Hall in the Bentley figures dramatically in all accounts of the race, many matters of great interest to Lagonda enthusiasts are not available in the published reports. Through the kindness of Mr. Arthur Fox I have been able to extract from the Fox and Nicholl files some details of special interest.

At the request of Sir Edgar Holberton, then Chairman of Lagondas, Arthur Fox entered, and managed, the Lagonda team for the 1934 T.T. He was responsible for all aspects of this venture from preparing the cars, selecting the drivers, controlling the team, down to such details as booking hotel and shipping accommodation.

Three near-standard M.45 4½-litre chassis were delivered to Fox and Nicholl's for special bodies to be built on them to conform to the T.T. regulations and at the same time to be as light and of as small a frontal area as possible. They were designed by Fox and built at the Fox and Nicholl garage. Arthur Fox was frequently consulted by the works about modifications desirable both to the engines and chassis and as many of his suggestions as possible were incorporated in the team cars.

The power units were specially assembled by Lagondas but Henry Meadows Ltd., the actual makers of the engine, metalled, bedded in and bored the main bearings. Both Fox and Cranmer, the technical director of Lagondas, wished to stiffen the crankcase. The relative flexibility of this component was (and still is) the principal factor in limiting the maximum safe revs. It should be remembered that the original designed maximum continuous output of this motor was 103 b.h.p. at 3,000 r.p.m. In order to stiffen it the crankcases were specially cast in RR50 material, which eventually became standard for all the 4½-litre engines. Lagondas asked for the crankcase to be strengthened around the main bearings but it is not clear whether Meadows were able to do this. They did, however, increase the size of the studs holding down the cylinder block.

Special connecting rods were obtained from Meadows; these were not split at the "small end" as in the production rods and the "small end" bolt merely located the gudgeon pin but did not pinch it. The rods were finished and machined all over at Staines. The size of the "big end" journal was increased to 2⅛ in. This increase of ⅛ in. became standard first on the production Rapides and eventually on all the 4½-litres. The rods were metalled direct, not fitted with separate thick shells as on the original M.45. This is yet another race inspired modification which eventually became standard. Special valves were used but no details of in what way they were special is available. Split cotters were substituted for the original slot and bar through the valve stem. This greatly strengthened the valve stem by eliminating the drilling of a hole through it.

Push rods, rockers and tappets were of a lightened type which Meadows supplied and which were also adopted on later production models. A Scintilla horizontal magneto replaced the B.T.H. one, and eventually became standard although subsequent tests of the engine showed no improvement in the power developed with this unit. The sump was fitted with an oil thermometer and an attempt was made to reduce oil surge by means of heavy wire gauze baffles. Martlett pistons designed to give 7-1 compression ratio with the standard gasket were fitted but eventually a Klingerite gasket .042 thinner than the then standard C. & A. gasket was used in its place. The inlet and exhaust ports were machined and polished, but the standard manifolds were retained. These modifications permitted the engine to run safely up to 3,800 r.p.m. and Fox considered that it could be held at 3,600 r.p.m. for the duration of the longest sports car races with perfect reliability. This, incidentally, was the engine speed held almost continuously by the Lagonda for the whole of the 1936 500-mile race at Brooklands.

A Roper and Wreaks 11 in. clutch was used and a special final drive ratio of 3.14-1 was employed, third was 4.05-1; second 5.75-1 and bottom 8.94-1. These gave approximately the following speeds at 3,800 r.p.m. using 19 × 600 tyres, Top 110; 3rd 84; 2nd 59; and bottom 38.

The road springs were flattened as much as possible leaving approximately 3 in. room for full bump with solid spring eyes and "anti wrap" leaves.

The standard servo braking system was replaced by Girling rod operated brakes. This was yet another modification that eventually became standard on all the production models. The normal radiator shutters were hand operated instead of thermostat controlled, the fans removed and a 27 gallon petrol tank was fitted shaped to conform to the bodies. All chassis bolts were split pinned or tab washered. The completed cars *unladen* weighed 33 cwt. 1 qr. Weight distribution being from 16 cwt.; rear 17 cwt. 1 qr.

The information given above was obtained direct from Mr. A. W. Fox and from a long letter by the Works Manager (E. H. Bolton) of Lagondas Ltd. dated 6th July 1934.

From the Fox and Nicholl files it is extremely difficult to tie up engine bench test figures with specific cars as in most cases these reports are filed in separate folders of their own; the engines are not often identified by numbers, and sometimes the figures are merely in the form of pencilled notes with odd references to unidentifiable events or modifications.

However, a series of bench tests, clearly documented, were carried out on the 16th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd August 1934 on engine No. M45/271. The first three tests were with a .060 in. gasket and the best results were 120 b.h.p. at 3,400 r.p.m. falling to 119.5 at 3,600; and 112.5 at 3,800 r.p.m.

This was slightly disappointing as it was hoped to sustain full power up to 3,800 r.p.m. Modifications (mainly to ignition timing and carburation) produced no improvement until a thinner gasket .018 in. was substituted, which of course raised the compression ratio. The best results then were 120.75 b.h.p. at 3,400 r.p.m.; rising to 120.0 b.h.p. at 3,600 r.p.m.; falling very slightly to 121.75 b.h.p. at 3,800. These results were obtained using K needles and ignition setting 46.5° before T.D.C. fully advanced. None of the bench test figures go above 3,800 r.p.m.

It is noticeable that peak power was produced at 200 r.p.m. below what was considered the safe maximum for these engines. Although it was intended to adhere to a rev limit of 3,600 except in emergencies, the fall of only a quarter of one brake horse power between peak power and maximum permitted revs was not of any consequence.

The cars prepared can be identified with certainty from Fox and Nicholl's letter of the 24th August 1934 addressed to the British Oak Insurance Ltd. (relating to policy No. MTC 780244) in which the three Lagondas are specified as BPK 201; BPK 202; and BPK 203.

The drivers were the Hon. Brian Lewis No. 1; John Hindmarsh No. 2; and John Cobb No. 3. It should be mentioned that Cobb's car was delivered to Fox and Nicholl last of the three and did not have quite as much work done on it as the other two.

Practice for the race took place on the 29th and 30th August. On the first day Brian Lewis did only three laps in No. 1, his best being 11 mins. 10 secs. Hindmarsh in No. 2 managed 11 mins. 18 secs. and Cobb's best was 11 mins. 26 secs. Brian Lewis then drove Cobb's car but could not make it go as fast as No. 1; his best efforts being 11 mins. 16 secs. Hall was very fast in his Bentley with a best lap of 10 mins. 33 secs. The Invictas were disappointing with a fastest lap of 11 mins. 23 secs. which was beaten by the three fastest Magnettes, Norman Black doing 11 mins. 6 secs.; A. P. Hamilton 11 mins. 11 secs. and W. L. Handley 11 mins. 12 secs.

The second day's practice proved much faster for Lagondas, Brian Lewis getting down to 10 mins. 45 secs.; Hindmarsh 10 mins. 47 secs. and Cobb 11 mins. 13 secs. Hall was 9 secs. faster than Lewis and the Invictas improved to 11 mins. 20 secs. not as fast as the best of the Ford V.8's. The Magnettes had not so much in hand, their best effort being 11 mins. 1 sec.

Arthur Fox was not in favour of "record breaking" during practice for a handicap event, where starting positions were already determined, and he did not press the drivers to practice more than the minimum they felt they needed, in order to know the course.

Although the race was a handicap and the big cars had to make up on the Magnettes one lap plus 7 mins. 45 secs., as far as the spectators were concerned it quickly developed into an exciting neck and neck struggle between E. R. Hall's Bentley and Brian Lewis's Lagonda. On the standing lap they did 10 mins. 41 secs. and 10 mins. 46 secs. respectively and for the first 11 laps Hall drew ahead at the rate of approximately 9-10 secs. per lap. By lap 12 Brian Lewis was holding him and Hindmarsh was less than a minute in the rear of No. 1. On lap 14 Hall came in for fuel and tyres and it is possible that he had carried somewhat less fuel than the Lagondas which may in part account for his faster early laps. Furthermore, in a long race (478 miles)

it was not Fox's policy to encourage his drivers to go flat out from the fall of the flag, although he considered it necessary to keep at least one car within striking distance of the leader. Hall had very quickly got down to 10 mins. 15 secs. which was about his average all through the race, whereas Brian Lewis increased his speed steadily each lap until, on lap 15, he too did 10 mins. 15 secs.

When the Bentley came into the pits Brian Lewis went into the lead followed at one minute's interval by Hindmarsh. For four laps the two Lagondas led and then No. 1 had to come in for petrol, tyres and brake adjustment. This was accomplished in 2 mins. 44 secs. (about 20 secs. quicker than Hall).

On lap 18 Lagonda No. 2 held a one minute advantage over the Bentley but when on the next lap Hindmarsh came in for tyres and petrol, Hall who had overtaken Brian Lewis while he was in the pits, was leading the race by one minute and he stayed ahead until lap 26 when he had to have fuel and tyres again. It was on this lap that the leading Lagonda completed a lap in 10 mins. 8 secs., its fastest in the race. Hall had been going extremely rapidly up to then, between 5 and 10 seconds faster than the Lagondas. Whether this was due to his running with only a partly filled tank I do not know, but it is noticeable that Lewis' recorded times improved as his fuel level fell, and all the Lagondas were capable of completing the course with only one stop for fuel. With the exception of No. 1 they required only one tyre change.

On laps 26 and 27 the two leading cars ran absolutely neck and neck past the timing box, but two laps later the Lagonda established a slight lead which was increased by a second or two per lap until lap 31. Then Hall put in a tremendous effort to get round in 10 mins. 6 secs. (81.15 m.p.h.) the fastest lap of the day. This gave him a 5 secs. lead. By now Brian Lewis's tyres were down to the marker strip, and his brakes were losing efficiency due to excessive pedal travel, so Arthur Fox called him in for a wheel change. Meanwhile Hindmarsh had been lapping consistently at around 10 mins. 25 secs. with a fastest lap of 10 mins. 12 secs. and he finished the race less than one minute behind Lewis, 5th on handicap and 3rd in the class. John Cobb was about 25 secs. a lap slower than his team mates in a slightly slower car and finished 8th on handicap, 4th in the class.

The fate of the Invictas is of interest, as not only were they fitted with basically the same engine as the Lagondas but they were at least 7 cwt. lighter. However, they were both much slower, the best lap of the faster car being 10.56 and the slower one 11.4. Neither finished the race. They had, of course, a completely different chassis, brakes and running gear and the engine was much closer to the standard Meadows product than the Lagonda version. In the event it proved less reliable, as both Invictas retired with engine trouble, on lap 12 and lap 22 respectively out of a total of 35 for the full race distance.

The three Ford V.8's competing in the big car class, went very well considering their low cost and their $3\frac{1}{2}$-litre capacity, the fastest of them achieving a lap at 10 mins. 56 secs., but although one was still running at the end it finished outside its time limit.

One must accept that the performance of the $3\frac{1}{2}$-litre Bentley was really outstanding. So outstanding in fact that it was alleged to the R.A.C. that the car was fitted with a special non-standard aluminium alloy cylinder head instead of the production cast iron one. This was NOT found to be the case, and had it been so the car would have been disqualified as such a modification was not allowed by the regulations. It is certain that it had a very much higher compression ratio than standard. Some reports put it as high as 9-1, but R. Messerby, a director of Rolls Royce and Bentley Motors, cannot confirm that it was so high, although he agrees that special high compression pistons were fitted. The Lagondas were running at a little over 7-1 compression, and there is no doubt that the engine would have stood a higher one comfortably, as the following year 7.75-1 was used in virtually the same engine, using the same fuel.

Giving away 798 c.c. to the Lagondas, the Bentley really proved to be slightly faster on this circuit, which put a very high premium on road holding, braking and handiness in addition to sheer maximum speed and acceleration. Fox himself considers that tyres and brakes really

Through the generosity of a Club member, who prefers to be anonymous, WILBUR GUNN's grave at Englefield Green has been renovated and tidied up. The Club is most grateful for this thoughtful gesture and thanks are duly recorded.

lost him the 1934 T.T. as his fastest car and driver had to make two pit stops instead of one. Hall's race time was 6 hours, 13 mins. 41 secs.; Brian Lewis's 6 hours, 17 mins. 31 secs.; a difference of 3 mins. 50 secs. If you allow 3 minutes for a pit stop involving a change of tyres, 46 seconds extra taken on a standing as opposed to a flying lap and 10 extra seconds for the lap on which you came in (figures borne out by the R.A.C. published lap chart of the race) the Lagonda would have led the Bentley by 6 seconds! Nevertheless it must be mentioned that Hall's final three laps were decidedly slower than his average, perhaps he was deliberately easing up—perhaps he could not help it—he was only 17 seconds behind the Magnette on handicap at the end of the race, so, if he had been able to maintain his lap times at that period of about 10 mins. 19 secs. or better, for the last three laps, he would have won by 18 seconds. However, it must be remembered that it rained (on the far side of the circuit only), for the last couple of laps. One can of course speculate indefinitely on these lines.

The preceding and following articles are reprinted from early Magazines in order to refresh the memory of the great contribution made by the late Arthur Fox to Lagonda's racing history.

A. W. Fox and the Racing Lagondas

by L. S. Michael

ARTHUR FOX, WHO HAS RECENTLY RETIRED FROM active control of the famous Tolworth firm of Fox and Nicholl, was responsible for organizing ALL the outstanding Lagonda racing victories from 1934 to 1937. This period includes the greatest successes of the marque.

Mr. Fox very kindly tore himself away from his beloved Jersey Herd and spent a whole day with me at his old firm, going through masses of files extracting those concerned with Lagondas, and reminiscing in the most interesting way as old papers reminded him of incidents which had to our cars, and an impressive collection of struck him as amusing or dramatic. He very kindly made available to me, all the files relating photographs.

In the short time that has elapsed since then, the Magazine closed for press and it has not been possible to assemble the material in anything like coherent order; but this issue could not be allowed to pass without some tribute to Mr. Fox. Not only for his great achievements with Lagondas, but for the generous way he has made his time and material available to us. In some way I appear to have become the Club's unofficial "Godfather" to the 4½-litre, and I hope in the future to deal comprehensively with the racing history of this model.

The first racing 4½-litres made, which Arthur Fox prepared for, and entered in, the 1934 T.T. The drivers were John Hindmarsh, John Cobb and Brian Lewis. The same cars, with slight modification, ran in the 1935 Le Mans Race and the 1935 T.T.

Brian Lewis finished fourth on Handicap at an average speed of 77.57 m.p.h. The only car having a faster race average was E. R. Hall's 3½-litre Bentley which averaged 78.40 m.p.h.

A closely fought duel developed between the two, the Lagonda leading on several laps. Tyre wear was heavier on the Lagonda than the Bentley and when victory seemed to be within his grasp, Arthur Fox noticed that Lewis's tyres were on their last legs. In spite of urgings to the contrary, even by the tyre experts, Fox decided to bring his driver in for a change of tyres. Fox told me that in no circumstances would he take the slightest foreseeable risk with a driver's life even though the chances of finishing without trouble were high, furthermore as he pointed out, if a tyre *had* gone, even without detriment to the driver, the car would certainly not have finished with only the Bentley in front, and it would probably not have finished at all.

Hindmarsh was fifth on Handicap (third in absolute speed at 77.38 m.p.h.) and John Cobb was eighth at an average of 74.58 m.p.h. achieving the fifth fastest race average.

The cars were the forerunners of the 1935 M.45 Rapides, having similar engines with the slightly more robust crankshaft than the M.45, and Girlings replaced the servo brakes. The bodies were specially made lightweight four seaters.

The picture taken at Le Mans in 1935 is of the winning car No. 4, which Luis Fontes shared with

John Hindmarsh. The other Lagonda, No. 14, was owned by Dr. Benjafield, who bought it just before the race, sharing the wheel with Sir Ronald Gunter. Both cars were prepared by Fox, though there had not been much time to work on the second car. Towards the end of the race Dr. Benjafield came in thinking his back axle had failed, and this was checked without revealing any fault. It then transpired that all the gears in the gearbox were inoperative except top. It was at Arthur Fox's insistance that the race was re-joined. The course was completed in top gear only, to achieve the quite creditable result of thirteenth place, after almost deciding to retire.

Fairly early on, No. 4 had been in collision with an Aston Martin driven by Fothergill and this affected the braking and steering and increased front tyre wear considerably. But for this accident the winning car would have achieved an even higher race average than the 77.84 m.p.h. which it recorded.

The Le Mans cars were prepared for the 1935 T.T. John Hindmarsh drove No. 1 and Charles Dodson No. 2. The cars were rebuilt after Le Mans and modified by fitting an external exhaust system with a six branch manifold feeding into it. Brake tests showed that this gave more power—about 5 or 6 b.h.p. at 3,800 r.p.m. Hindmarsh finished seventh on handicap at an average speed of 78.87 m.p.h., an improvement of a little over 1 m.p.h. on the preceding year's figures. Dodson was eighth on handicap at 78.86 m.p.h. These times were the third and fourth fastest times for the race. E. R. Hall's Bentley doing 80.36 and Lord Howe in a 3.3 litre type 57 Bugatti 79.72. The race was won on handicap by Freddie Dixon in a Riley at 76.90 m.p.h.

It was a little while before this event, that Alan Good took over the main financial control of the company. W. O. Bentley joined the staff as technical director, but there was not time for him to do much development work on these two cars, which had been built in 1934. So keen was the new company to put up a good show that they offered Arthur Fox (the entrant) a bonus for every lap on which they were in front of the Rolls-built Bentley up to a total of fifteen laps, which bonus was duly earned in full, and Hindmarsh established the lap record at 82.37 m.p.h., $1\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. faster than Hall's best lap. Again tyre wear was a big handicap and Hindmarsh's car had a broken petrol pipe, which was repaired during the race.

The three Lagondas starting in the 1936 T.T. were EPE 97, a two seater (now my property) EPB 101 and EPB 102 both four seaters. The authority for this statement is a letter to Capt. Phillips of the R.A.C. on 27th August, 1936 and another to the British Oak Insurance Co. on 31st August, 1936, both written by Arthur Fox.

The two seater was No. 1 driven by Brian Lewis, both Lord Howe and Pat Fairfield had four seaters. There was little difference either in weight or appearance between the two types. The four seaters had a canvas cover secured by "Lift the dot" fasteners, over the back seats, while the two seater had a metal door which opened upwards to give access to a larger petrol tank. Brian Lewis had a terrific battle with Hall in a $4\frac{1}{4}$-litre Bentley and led him on no less than 8 out of the 30 laps, but a stud broke in the timing case allowing nearly all the oil to escape. This was not noticed until loss of oil pressure indicated that some damage had occured to the bearings, and then Lewis had to ease up to try and finish. This he did, coming fourteenth on handicap. Of the other two cars, Fairfield was fourth on handicap with a race average of 78.49 m.p.h., being the second fastest average to the Bentley which managed 80.81. Fairfield did achieve the fastest lap of all the finishers at 83.91 m.p.h. Lord Howe was fifth on handicap at an average speed of 78.46 being the third fastest finisher. The race was won on handicap by F. W. Dixon and C. Dodson in a Riley at 78.01 m.p.h. The Lagondas again suffered from heavy tyre wear.

The Lagondas used were basically LG.45 Rapides which had decidedly more power than the earlier types. They had the new cylinder heads, developed under the aegis of W. O. Bentley, and G9 gearboxes with very close ratios and synchromesh on 3rd gear and top. The negligible difference in race average and fastest

laps, as compared with 1935, must be attributed to the conditions prevailing in 1936. It is significant that the 4¼-litre Bentley only improved on the speed of its 3½-litre predecessor by half a mile an hour.

The engine of EPE 97 was hastily overhauled (a habit continued to the present day!) and the car was then prepared for the 500 mile race on the 19th September, 1936. It has been possible to identify the car in the 500 mile race because its chassis number is recorded on Fox and Nicholl's copy of the Brooklands Silencer declaration, dated 16th September, 1936. For this race 7.50 × 20 tyres were fitted to the rear wheels and a straight cut 3 to 1 rear axle was used. This gave a calculated speed of 120 at 3,600 r.p.m. The front brakes were removed and a special fairing was fitted over the dumb irons and the passenger's seat. In the event, many laps were completed at over 122 m.p.h., with both Brian Lewis and Lord Howe at the wheel. The Lagonda finished third at an average of 113.02 m.p.h. The Dixon 2-litre Riley was first at 116.86 and the Pacey Hassan special second at 115.96. Hall's Bentley was also running and it must have been some consolation to Arthur Fox and his drivers to have beaten it decisively this time.

Lagondas at Le Mans

An historical account by "16/65" of the entries of the marque which may cause consternation in some quarters by de-bunking claims for cars as "Le Mans" machines.

THE STORY OF LAGONDAS AT LE MANS BEGINS IN 1928 with a team of three 2-litres. These were standard high chassis cars, tuned, and slightly lightened. A special double butterfly in the induction system was reputed to have been experimented with in order to retain turbulence(!) at cut-off but it is probable that this was abandoned before the race.

In the entry list the Lagondas stood as follows:

No. 15 Sir Francis Samuelson and F. King.

No. 16 Baron Andre d'Erlanger and W. D. Hawkes.

No. 18. Clive Gallop and Hays.

Against them in the 2-litre class were two Italas, one driven by Robert Benoist, and two S.A.R.A's but, in all, there were only 33 starters. The course was very rough indeed by present standards and extended right down to an acute hairpin at la fourche de Pontlieue only just outside the town of Le Mans itself.

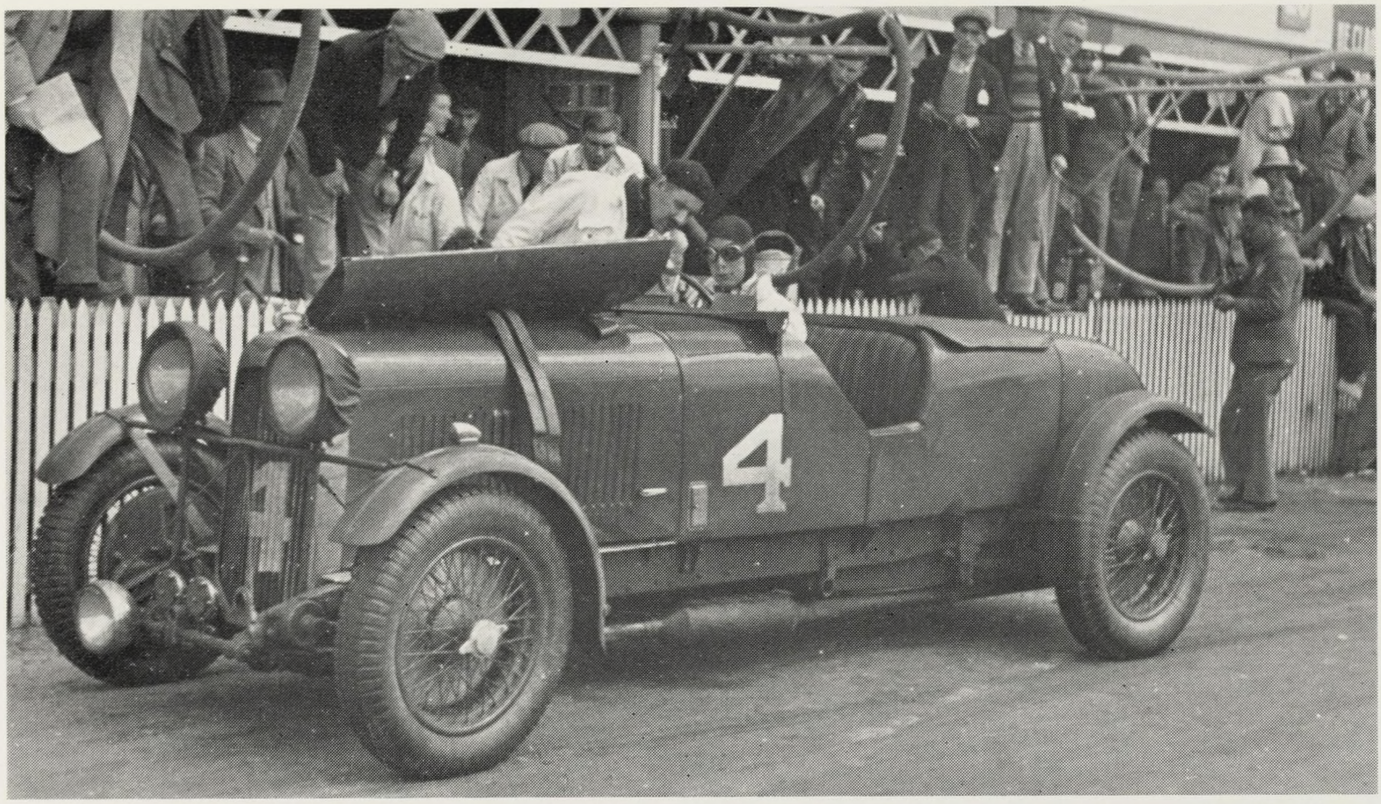
The account of the race, as affecting the Lagondas, is all too brief to tell. The 13th lap was an unlucky one for Samuelson who overcooked it at Mulsanne and charged into the sand. Then, whilst he was trying to get out, d'Erlanger ran into the back of him, fracturing his own offside dumbiron and slamming Samuelson back into the sand. Things were said that had not been heen heard between French Baron and English Baronet since the siege of Rouen centuries before. d'Erlanger disconnected his front brakes and continued, apparently unperturbed, but when Samuelson eventually freed his car and got it round to the pits it was too damaged to carry on. The third car started well enough and was running in 8th place but retired with engine trouble after only 23 laps had been completed.

Epic Drive—Epic Drivers

Despite all these misfortunes the d'Erlanger-Hawkes car ran on through the evening. As the drivers began to tire they forgot the state of the front end and began to go faster. All through the night the engine never missed a beat. By morning they were running 10th, but later in the day the damaged dumbiron came adrift altogether. Quite undeterred the car was driven to finish and by 4 p.m. on the Sunday, it had completed no less than 2,178 kilometres at an average speed of 54 m.p.h. Benoist's Itala finished ahead as did a little Salmson, but the only surviving S.A.R.A. was behind. The Lagonda came 11th out of 17 finishers. What an epic drive! What epic drivers!

Financial Trouble Intervenes

For 1929, Pontlieu corner was cut out. The course turned hard right a couple of hundred metres before the Fourche then shortly right again on to the road to Mulsanne. Lagondas planned to run another team of three cars; these were to have been prototypes of the low chassis model. Alas, financial troubles intervened, and in the event the only starter was a similar car privately ordered and entered by Rose Richards and to be driven by him and Brian Lewis. This car which was later to have a most successful career at Brooklands both in the hands of its first owner and later with R. R. Jackson, made a most unhappy debut. In the words of the official



The 1935 Race. Fontes makes a pit stop. Arthur Fox in cap and dark coat supervises intently. *Sporting Photos.*

history; "*Le Lagonda fut victime du mauvais sort a la suite de rapture d'un joint d'echapement*". Which joint of echapement it was, I do not know. I trust that I never shall be told, for it always pleases me to imagine that this was the first recorded failure of the diabolical bronze ring which was supposed to hold on to the cast iron exhaust manifold. All this before 500 kilometres were run.

In the years that followed money was even shorter. Only Dorothy Paget's generosity enabled Bentley to carry on and that, for but one year more. No Lagonda ran at Le Mans until 1934. In that year, Lord de Clifford entered his Rapier special, to be co-driven by Charles Brackenbury. The car was linered down to 1,080 c.c. to bring it into the 1,100 c.c. class along with Riley, M.G., Amilcar and Salmson. Unfortunately, the Riley was to the Rapier what Wellington, on Gilbert's judgment, was to the House of Lords. While the former was achieving the classic of success, all six finished and scored 1-2-3-4-9-11 on Index, the latter "Did nothing in particular and did it very well". That is to say, while it stopped for nothing more serious than the routine replenishments, it managed on the improved course, that, by then, included the new road through to Tertre Rouge, to clock only 21 kilometres further than d'Erlanger and Hawkes with the crippled 2-litre six years before. It was said at the time that it was only trying to qualify for the next year's Coupe Biennale.

The 4½-litre Entries for 1935

And so to 1935 when the aforementioned Rapier did not run but Messrs. Fox and Nicholls entered two of the three 4½'s which they had prepared so successfully for the previous year's T.T. These cars had been purchased from the makers as special M.45 chassis with the 10 ft. 3 in. wheelbase. After stripping them down completely, Arthur Fox had them very carefully rebuilt. The servo brakes were replaced by Girlings but, apart from that and leaving off such non-essential items as automatic chassis lubrication pipes, no alterations were made. The bodies were ugly compared with the classic line of the standard M.45. They had no running boards, cycle type wings, rather like square cut front doors, a brace across the body behind the front seats and a bulboid fairing to encase the spare wheel. The engines were modified in a manner that was to be the basis of the later Rapide series and had a compression ratio of approximately 7 to 1. In Le Mans form, a straight cut 3.14 to 1 back axle was used; the weight was about 27½ cwt. and the engine said to

deliver in the neighbourhood of 150 b.h.p. Car No. 4 was to be driven by Hindmarsh and the South American Fontes, the other, No. 14 by Dr. Benjafield and Sir Ronald Gunter.

The Lagonda First Away

Since the last victory of Bentley in 1930, the Grand Prix d'Endurance had been won each year by Alfa Romeo and for 1935 they were represented by four straight eight blown 2.3's driven as follows: Howe-Lewis; Heldé-Stoffel; Sommer-de Sauge and Chinnetti-Gastard. French hopes rested mainly on the type 50 Bugatti (4,958 c.c.) entered by Labric and Veyron, while Prince Nicholas of Roumania brought a 7-litre Duesenberg. The morning of the race was wet and foul. The afternoon no less, but the rain ceased before the 4 o'clock start. At the fall of the flag, Lewis, Chinetti and Hindmarsh were the first away, but at the end of the first lap the Lagonda had been passed by Sommer, Prince Nicholas, Heldé and Veyron.

At the end of one hour the Alfa Romeo's were 1-2-3 in the order Chinetti-Sommer-Heldé with Hindmarsh 4th, but already the Lewis/Howe car had had carburation troubles and soon Chinetti came in to remove a rear hub and inspect the brake linings. Next in to the Alfa pit was Heldé, but he was soon off again after his front shock absorbers had been adjusted. Thus after two hours the order was Sommer in front, nearly three minutes ahead of Hindmarsh, with Veyron just behind, 3rd. Before long it began to rain again and the field became bunched when Elwes overturned his Aston Martin.

The First Pit Stops

After the regulation 24 laps the cars began to come in for their first refuelling stops. Sommer was to receive the news that his co-driver was ill and so he must continue alone. His stop took over two minutes as did that of the Duesenberg, but Veyron handed the refuelled Bugatti over to Labric in only 1¼, so it left the pits just ahead of Fontes in second place.

Sommer evidently decided to build up a lead whilst he was still relatively fresh and although Fontes repassed Labric the Alfa pressed on to a lead of over two laps before dark. The other Alfas were once more au point, and both Howe, who put up the fastest lap of the race at 83.75 m.p.h., and Heldé passed Veyron and began to overhaul the Lagonda. At 9 p.m. the order was:

1. Sommer (Alfa-Romeo), 58 laps, 5h. 56m. 4s. (av. 81.87 m.p.h.)

2. Hindmarsh/Fontes (Lagonda), 56 laps, 5h. 53m. 47s.

3. Heldé/Stoffel (Alfa-Romeo), 56 laps, 5h. 57m. 34s.

Followed by Howe, Veyron and Benjafield.

The 1,000 kilometre mark was passed before midnight with Sommer still ahead but very shortly afterwards he jerked his way into the pits for a stop of half an hour while a choked petrol pipe was unblocked and Hindmarsh took the Lagonda into the lead. This was the first time that the marque had been in such a position in a Continental road race since 1902. The race situation was still very fluid. First the Bugatti gained the lead from the Lagonda, then Brian Lewis stormed past them both, so that by 2 a.m. no less than five cars, all of which were still going strong, had held first place. *Formidable*!

The course, especially at Arnage, was cutting up badly, and very soon Lagonda No. 4 pulled into the pits with the lamp glasses broken by stones despite the wire mesh guards. The Fox and Nicholls organisation was equal to the emergency, and Arthur Fox had celluloid covers ready to fit over the headlights. However, when the Lagonda got going again, it had dropped to 4th place and by half way, 4 a.m., the order was:

1. Howe/Lewis (Alfa Romeo), 113 laps, 11h. 55m. 25s. (av. 79.45 m.p.h.)

2. Veyron/Labric (Bugatti), 113 laps, 11h. 57m. 43s.

3. Heldé/Stoffel (Alfa-Romeo), followed by Hindmarsh, Chinetti, Benjafield and Sommer.

Or put another way: Alfa Romeo, Bugatti, Alfa Romeo, Lagonda, Alfa Romeo, Lagonda, Alfa Romeo. Not bad! All the main competitors running, except the Duesenberg, but Sommer was to fall out almost at once. Throughout the night it rained intermittently, but the excitement was so intense that a huge crowd watched on through the darkness. The lights of the cars shimmered on the wet road and as they swung through corners the beams cleaved a passage between pallisades topped with a seemingly endless pattern of intent glistening faces. The crowd was hushed, but behind the patter of rain through the pine trees, the garish din of distant dance music mingled with the rising exhaust note of a car as it accelerated up the hill from Mulsanne corner. Suddenly a restlessness was in the air, a murmur of voices, a movement of arms on top of the pallisades; the Bugatti was overdue. The raucous loudspeakers

blared out some trivial news and the murmuring increased. The shrill note of the Alfa Romeos chilled the hearts of all Frenchmen as they passed screeching joyfully into the distance. The next rent the dawn air; "*Hellohello; la voiture numero deux, Bugatti, a terminee sa course. Elle a abandonnee a la suite d'une rapture de couronne du pont arriere. C'est la voiture numero onze, Alfa Romeo, qui prend le commandment*". It was 4.14 a.m. and the sea of faces began to thin.

For those who remained the excitement was by no means over. Dawn came and with it once again the music on the loudspeakers dramatically stopped. A pause; silence; then:

"*Hellohello; la voiture numero onze, Alfa Romeo, a terminee sa course.*

Maintenant a cinq heures: Premier; voiture numero douze, Alfa Romeo.

Deuxieme; voiture numero quatre, Lagonda.

Troisieme; voiture numero quatorze, Lagonda.

Quatrieme; voiture numero vingt neuf, Aston Martin.

Cinquieme—sixieme—septieme—"

Lagonda Temporarily in Lead

By 8 a.m., three-quarters distance, the first Lagonda ran into a temporary 90 second lead whilst Heldé handed over to Stoffel. For some time the other car had been having trouble in the gearbox and Dr. Benjafield, now running in top all the time, was falling back and intent only on qualifying for next year. The road where it was not cut up, was very slippery indeed and about 15 m.p.h. was all that most drivers were managing out of the final righthander at Arnage. When No. 4 came into change all four wheels, the Alfa went once more into the lead and throughout the morning was lapping just a shade faster than either Hindmarsh or Fontes could manage.

With but three hours to go, the Alfa came in for its last replenishment stop. Here it was discovered that the radiator was leaking and the rules did not allow of another stop to fill up. Frantic work in the Alfa pit. Soon the hole was plugged and Stoffel tore back into the race with both the announcer and the official scoreboard indicating that he was still in the lead. In fact Hindmarsh was three minutes in front of him. The finish was a sensation. Too late it seemed the Frenchman's pit realised their mistake and "FASTER" signals were frantically displayed. Then Hindmarsh indicated that he wished to come in and change a wheel. What if the hub sticks? Only three minutes to play with! All goes well, and he is away in 30 seconds. Stoffel realises that he cannot make up the time and comes in to look at the radiator and hand over to Heldé. Four o'clock! As the Lagonda wins, Heldé is battling with the loose stones at Mulsanne. **Victory is ours,** and to make it more complete, the second car finishes in 13th place and qualifies for next year.

Next year! alas, there was to be no next year. The strikes all over France caused the race to be abandoned and the two cars which Fox & Nicholls had prepared for it ran in the French Grand Prix instead.

1936 Coupe Biennale qualifications carried over to the next year. Although two cars thus qualified, Arthur Fox was no longer able to continue supporting a racing programme, and only one, to be driven by Hindmarsh and Brackenbury, was entered. No Lagonda has ever finished in the two year event and this year nothing went right. There is nothing of interest to report. For the record one must look amongst "Non classes et abandons" No. 3 Lagonda retired when 39th on its 30th lap (404km.760).

Influence of W. O. Bentley

No Lagonda ran in 1938, but W. O. Bentley joined the board of the company and it was due to his influence that a decision was made late that year to run a factory entry for the next. Thus Lagonda Ltd. became the second English firm to enter a car with the hope of winning the Grand Prix d'Endurance. The only other was a Bentley in 1925-1930. The plan for 1939 was to use the car as an experiment to collect data for an all-out effort in 1940. Preparation was, of necessity rather on the hurried side; the more so as Lord Selsdon decided late in February to enter a sister car to be driven by himself and Lord Waleran. In fact three chassis were prepared, the last to be given a saloon body and used to attack the long distance records at Montlhery.

Safe 6,000 r.p.m., 210 b.h.p.

The design of the cars was under the direction of Mr. Invermee, W.O.'s chief engineer. Starting with the short chassis V.12 as a basis, the weight was reduced from 29 to 27 cwt. and an offset windcheating body designed. The breathing of the engine was much improved by using a four-branch manifold and four downdraught SU L4 carburettors. Mr. Laurence Pomeroy giving a

pre-race review in *The Motor* estimated that the engine would run safely up to 6,000 r.p.m. and produce something in the nature of 210 b.h.p.

There was great speculation as to who was to drive the work's car. An early tip was Seaman and Howe, but Mercedes were said to be being difficult about the former and the latter was appointed official R.A.C. Observer. Finally the choice fell upon Dobson and Brackenbury and when the flag fell on June 17th, it was Dobson who got away in front of the whole pack at the start. A Lagonda in the lead again after a gap of 24 hours less than four years.

The experimental nature of the exercise was rigidly adhered to. "W.O." himself stood on the pit counter to see that it was so, and 5,000 r.p.m. was the maximum allowed in the gears. Thus it was that after one hour, whilst Louis Gerard's Delage was racing away nearly a minute ahead of the detuned Grand Prix Delahayes of Mazaud and Paul Wimille's type 57SC Bugatti and the Darracqs of Chinetti and Hug, Dobson was 12th and Lord Selsdon 19th.

Gruelling Pace Tells

The pace was killing. By midnight, Heldé's Talbot and Paul's Delahaye had fallen out and two hours later, Mazaud caught fire, so that the Lagondas became 6th and 7th. By 8 a.m. Chaboud's Delahaye had retired; then Mathieson crashed the Chinetti Darracq when it threw a tread at Mulsanne and Hug disappeared on the same lap. The Lagondas became 3rd and 4th.

Raised Hopes Dashed

There were no excitements during the morning. The Lagondas lapped steadily at 87 m.p.h. Then, suddenly, near mid-day the flying Delage came into the pits with mechanical ennui. Wimille immediately speeded up his Bugatti to lap at 94 m.p.h. and passed the stationary Delage. The Lagondas remained at 87. Then the Bugatti stopped whilst Wimille did some tuning out on the Mulsanne straight. Could the unexpected be going to happen? Alas, no. Both the French cars got going again, and at 1 p.m. Sunday the position was:

1. Wimille/Veyron (Bugatti), 219 laps
2. Gerard/Monneret, (Delage), 217 laps
3. Dobson/Brackenbury (Lagonda), 208 laps
4. Selsdon/Waleran (Lagonda), 208 laps

Followed by the three remaining B.M.W.'s at 206, 204 and 201 laps.

During the final stages the Lagondas, as steady as ever, closed a little on the Delage, as did the first B.M.W. on the Lagondas, but the order did not change. Both the Lagondas exceeded the winning distance of the year before. Neither engine was extended. Both cars were raced shortly after at Brooklands without modification.

The qualifications for the next race were taken over by Aston Martin after the War.

What has happened to all these Le Mans Lagondas. The 1928 car (PK 9204), is still with us. Mr. Douglas Hull, to whom I am indebted for the information on the 1935 cars, is rebuilding the Hindmarsh/Fontes car* and another of the three T.T. cars is in good hands in America. One of the '36 French Grand Prix cars was cut up by Goodhew and all the V.12's are accountable but where are the rest? Any information to be gladly received by the Editor.

* Now owned by David Johnson. Ed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mrs. Eileen Smith

Dear Sir—Club Members will be distressed to learn that Eileen Smith, wife of Ian Smith, lost her life as a result of a tragic road accident earlier this year and Ian's daughter and son-in-law were badly injured. Ian fortunately was not involved in the accident. Midlands members particularly, will miss Eileen's cheerful and ready humour at Lagonda events which she and Ian always regularly attended. It does not seem possible that we shall not see her again and the Club will be all the poorer because of this very sad loss.

Ian consequently has not been able to attend more recent Lagonda activities but knowing his indomitable spirit we feel sure that we shall see him amongst us this coming season and we assure him that a warm and sympathetic welcome awaits from all his friends.

PETER DENSHAM

Solihull, Warks.

(I was particularly upset to hear this sad news from Peter. I came to know Eileen and her family well some years ago at the time Ian was involved with producing the Magazine. I know the Committee will wish to join me in expressing our deepest sympathy to Ian in his bereavement. Editor.)

Rapier News from Australia

Dear Sir—At last I have had the Rapier running and competed in a V.S.C.C. (Australia) Hill Climb at the end of June, completely without distinction as the engine ran properly for the first time in the pits on the morning of the event. The Rapier was without mudguards, windscreen and bonnet, so the car was entered in the same class as Historic Racing Cars.

I used Triumph Mayflower pistons in the engine although they have flat tops and so slightly lower the compression ratio but this is largely compensated by the increase in bore. I also had the block and cylinder head surfaces ground.

Between June and September not much more work was done but since then I have made an effort to finish fitting the mudguards. By the end of the year I hope to have the car on the road bearing a new registration number LAG 000, which I was fortunate to reserve.

BERNARD JACOBSEN
Doncaster East,
Victoria, Australia.

Lagonda Tri-Car—see Magazine No. 74.

Dear Sir—Thank you for your letter with regard to my article on the 1904 Lagonda Tri-car. Most certainly you may reproduce it if you think it is of interest to your members.

I feel that it is very untechnical for your members and would be glad if you would put a note that the article was written to be read as an essay to a non-technical Essay Society, not to the motoring fraternity.

It may interest you to know that the Lagonda Tri-car about which I wrote is still in the family. I misguidedly gave my half share to my twin brother as I had acquired another veteran. He unfortunately, has not run it, but had agreed to enter it in this years London to Brighton. However, a visit to Canada has made this impossible. I am keeping heavy pressure up on him, and I am sure it will be seen on the roads again. I think it is probably the earliest Lagonda in existance.

P. R. SOUTHALL
Rednal, Birmingham.

MAGAZINE COPY

All contributions for publication in the SPRING 1972 issue should be with the Editor by Feb. 25th. Copy for Summer 1972 magazine by April 25th please.

Rapiers, Rapiers

Dear Sir—Oh dear! A wrong caption to one of the photos in the Autumn Magazine! The photo on page 3 is not of the supercharged Rapier owned by John Batt and myself, but is my Ranalah 2 seater Rapier which is "bog" standard. The photo was taken at Gaydon last May. The body on this car, by the way is believed to be unique in that no other Ranalah 2 seaters are known. Other Rapiers with Ranalah bodies all have 4 seats and the line of the body at the rear is different.

I was interested in the Road Report in the same Magazine on the Lagonda Rapier 2 seater. The text notes that it was a Warwick Wright Special. In fact the car was (and still is) an Eagle bodied 2 seater. As far as I know Warwick Wright were just the Agents for them—there was nothing really Special! The car featured in the Road Report is BPJ 160 and is still in existence in the hands of John Sealey, a Rapier Register member in Somerset.

TONY WOOD
Kings Heath,
Birmingham.

(Very sorry! Trouble is Tony sends us so many excellent photographs for the Magazine and Album that some confusion set in. Anway its an interesting letter. Ed.)

Sheet F.A. 547!

Dear Sir—Further to my article in one of last years quarterly Magazines, I would very much like to hear from past and present owners of 3-litre D.B. Lagondas whose ignition keys *did not* have the number F.A. 547. All the fifteen or sixteen cars I've had bore this number. Is it possible that 3-litre D.B. cars were built around a job lot of ignition locks? There was a variation in glove compartment and boot keys—M.R.N. 3, 6 and even 9!

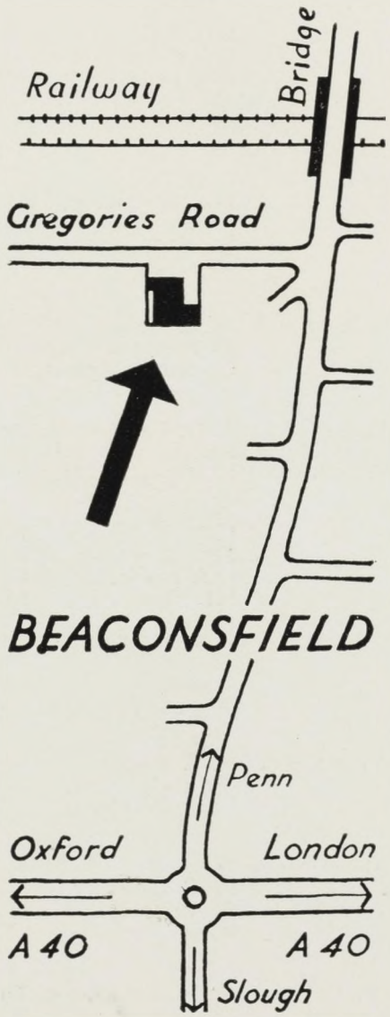
HAROLD COLLINS
Ashton-under-Lyne,
Lancs.

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 anyone 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, Penicuick, Midlothian	The Commodore Hotel, Marine Drive, Edinburgh. 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	To be announced	
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	J. B. Castle, 16 Porthkerry Road, Rhoose, Barry, Glam.	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. Nolten, 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	Dr. A. Young, 'The Towers' Hookhill Road, Paignton, Devon.	To be arranged
19	London		Coach & Horses Hill St., W.1. 1st Thursday

LAGONDA SERVICE



We have a large stock of useful spare parts for Lagonda cars still available. Although the demand for parts has deminished 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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