



# **THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 82      Winter 1973**





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FRONT COVER: The Golden Age of Motoring—F. Gordon Crosby's dramatic rendering of Continental high speed touring now has the quality of a by-gone age. Reproduced by courtesy of the *Autocar*.



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## NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Another year is at a close and the Committee and the Editor take the opportunity of wishing all Club members at home and abroad a happy and a trouble-free motoring year in 1974. The Editor extends his grateful thanks to all contributors to the Magazine during the past twelve months and looks forward to their continuing support.

\* \* \* \*

HENRY COATES is considerably improved after his serious illness last summer but has reluctantly accepted the advice that Lagondas have become a strenuous type of motoring and after working so many years to produce another successful 'Special' has had to give it up when almost completed.

A photograph below shows his new immaculate Lagonda with his previous M.45 Special now of course owned by Roy Paterson.

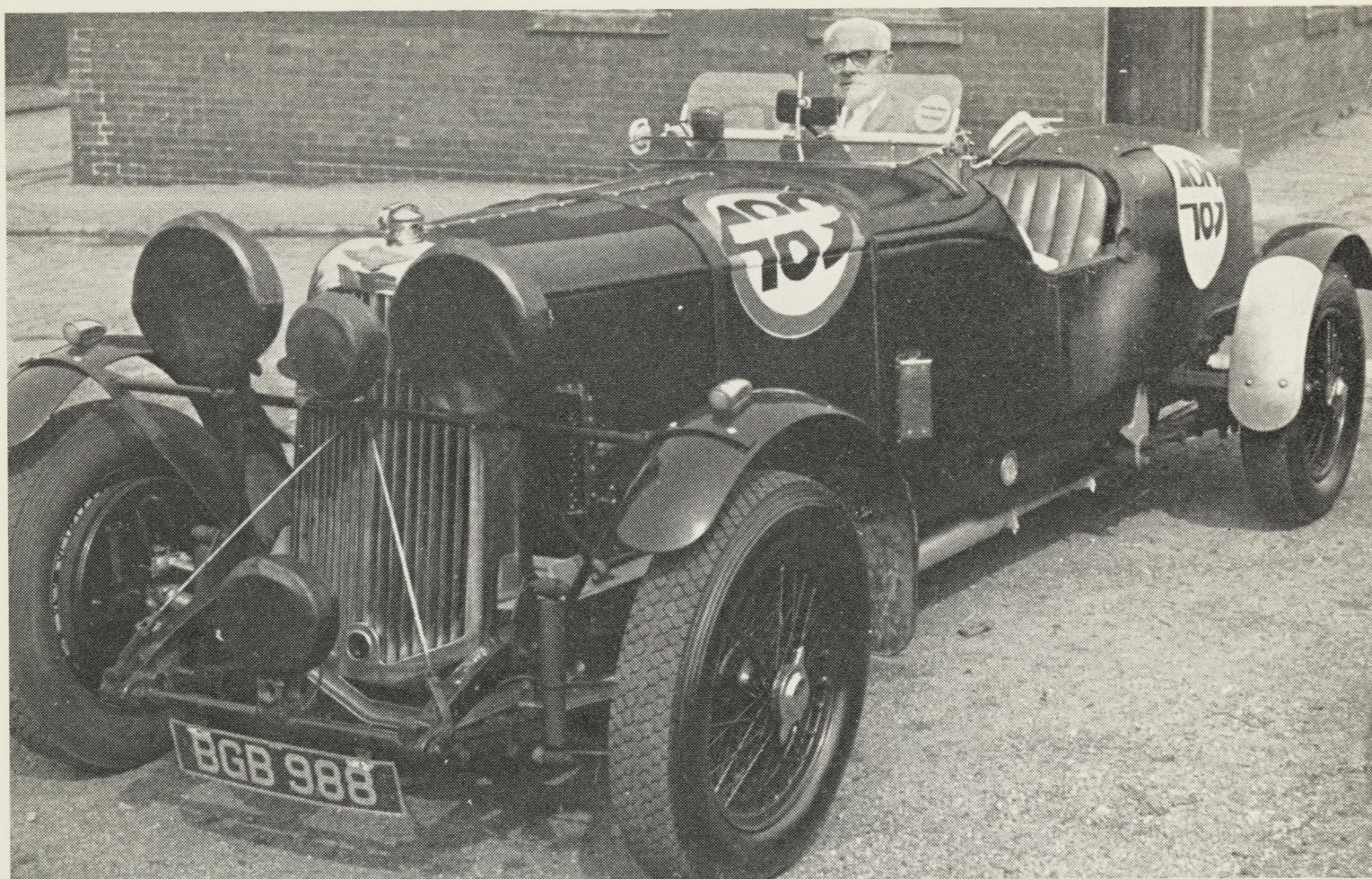
\* \* \* \*

HARRY GOSTLING's brother Ian has generously asked your Committee to consider the purchase of a trophy award in memory of dear Harry. After careful thought it was suggested to Ian that as Harry was a regular contributor to the Magazine, the trophy could take the form of something on the lines of an "Expensive Noises" design which would be awarded annually with a Parker pen to the writer judged to have submitted the most interesting article to the Magazine and published in the previous year. Ian has agreed to this and plans are now afoot to prepare the trophy. An announcement as to the winner for 1973 will be made shortly.

\* \* \* \*







The "Fire Engine"—last of a line

*Photo: H. Schofield*

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## **The Northern Lagonda Factory 1963–1973 THE TRUE STORY**

by Herb Schofield

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TO MOST PEOPLE OLDHAM CONJURES UP MENTAL pictures of huge mills belching out smoke, cobbled streets ringing to the sounds of clogs and rows of identical terraced houses. You would of course be only partially correct. True, there are the mills, few of which still produce cotton. But the rows of friendly terraced houses are slowly giving way to the usual concrete and plastic blocks which will make Oldham look like anywhere else, and everywhere else look like Oldham, which is presumably what the planners want.

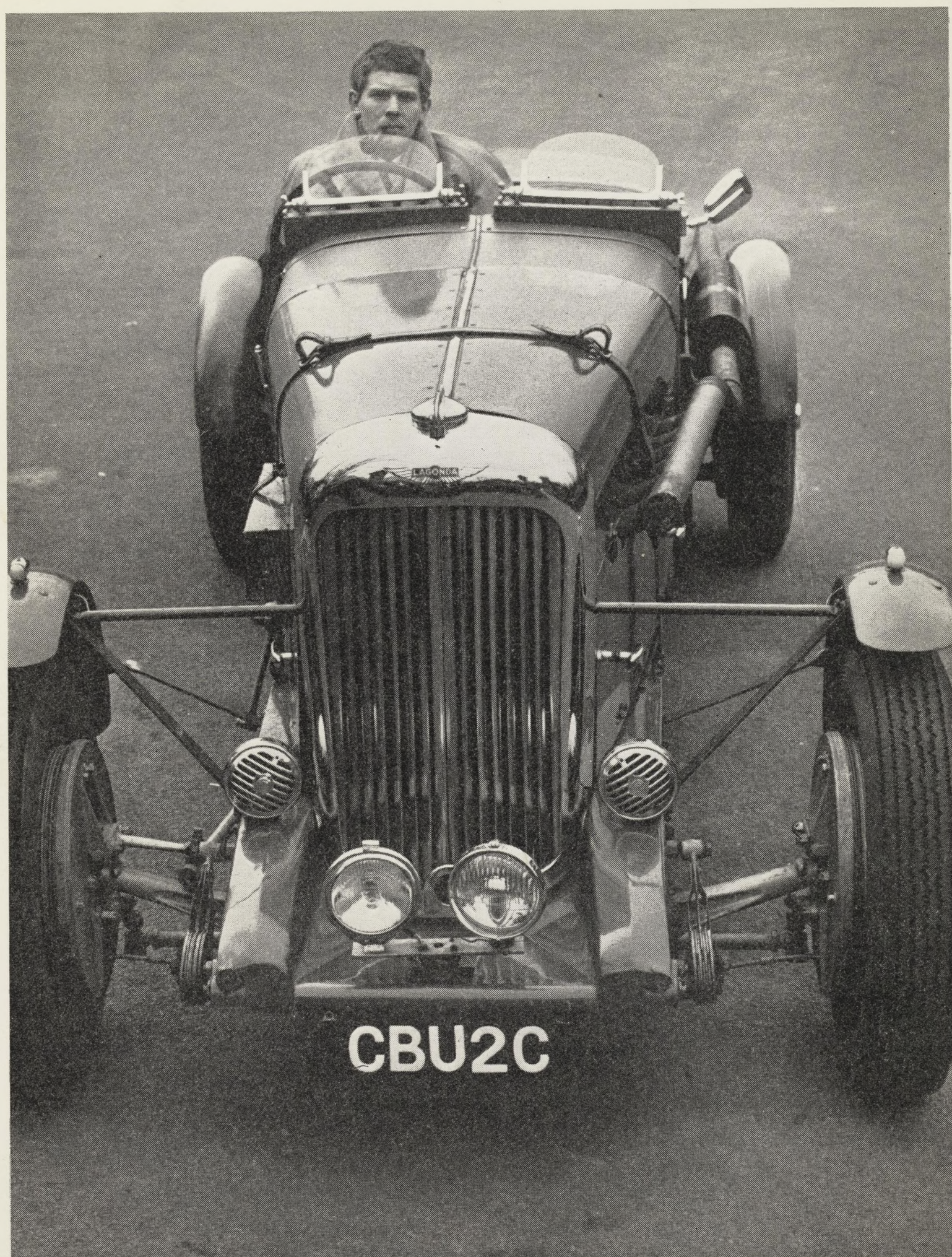
The town has no special claims to fame except

that its output of 'new' Lagonda cars manufactured there is only exceeded by Staines and Newport Pagnell! It is frightening to realize that it is now ten years ago that David Hine and myself shook hands and started to build our first motor car.

In 1963/4 people competed quite fiercely in standard Lagondas and I was no exception using my LG.45 Rapide for all types of events, however, the thought of catching my beautiful body against the cycle wings of less exotically bodied vintage racers turned my thoughts towards constructing something special for competition. Plans were therefore drawn up and it was decided to roughly copy the body of the LG.45R Team cars, mainly because it was a fairly simple style for the amateur, and the old team cars were certainly extremely competitive in their day and of course have been since.

So far everything was a pipedream. I had no bits with which to manufacture a car, worse, I had no mechanical knowledge; eventually the former problem was solved but the latter is still with me! However at this point David Hine entered the stage and he was a very clever young lad.





The original "Special" as she was completed in April 1965

*Photo: Oldham Chronicle*



The basis of our dream car was a very tired old Sanct III LG.45 Saloon purchased from tired old Brian Dearden-Briggs (ex Northern Sec.) in exchange for fifteen crisp notes and a promise to leave his wife alone. I remember at the time thinking this rather expensive as the engine and gearbox were not included, but worse the petrol tank contained a rather unpleasant liquid squirted there by visiting Club members returning from the pub to Brian's house, which of course was a Mecca for Lagonda devotees in those days. We all thought it terribly amusing at the time. The final laugh of course was on us when the restoration required the removal of the contents. Clever Herb entrusted this somewhat delicate operation to innocent David who sneakily poured the mixture into the petrol tank of his car when I wasn't looking. Understandably the performance of his machine was somewhat impaired for a time as the engine digested this rather unsavoury mixture!

What memories are now recalled. The garage was behind the luggage factory where I work and write this article. The premises were unheated, ill lit, damp and contained a bare minimum of essential tools. However fortified by blind enthusiasm and Oldham Brewery, and sure in the knowledge that the car would certainly be the hottest thing ever unleashed on the vintage scene, and at the same time admit us to a world of 'racy' women and envious admirers, meant that she was completed in the time of four months, and emerged from our premises in February 1965. Two months later she made her debut at Silverstone. Unfortunately at that time she was not the fantastically fast racer we had hoped for—in fact she seemed to have some difficulty in keeping up with the Bedford van which acted as a tender vehicle in those days. In time of course she did come good and in the three seasons we had her gained 23 awards in 48 events entered. Not all our activity with the car was confined to racing, and indeed she proved to be a splendid road vehicle with all that effortless performance which makes the 4½ such a relaxing car in comparison to the Rapier (that should start something!) It was with genuine sorrow therefore that we sold the car to Alan Brown at the end of the 1967 season. I don't think it unfair of me to comment that after this the old girl did go downhill owing to Alan's rather splendid habit of lending the car to all sorts of people to cut their racing teeth on, with the result that nobody really looked after her.

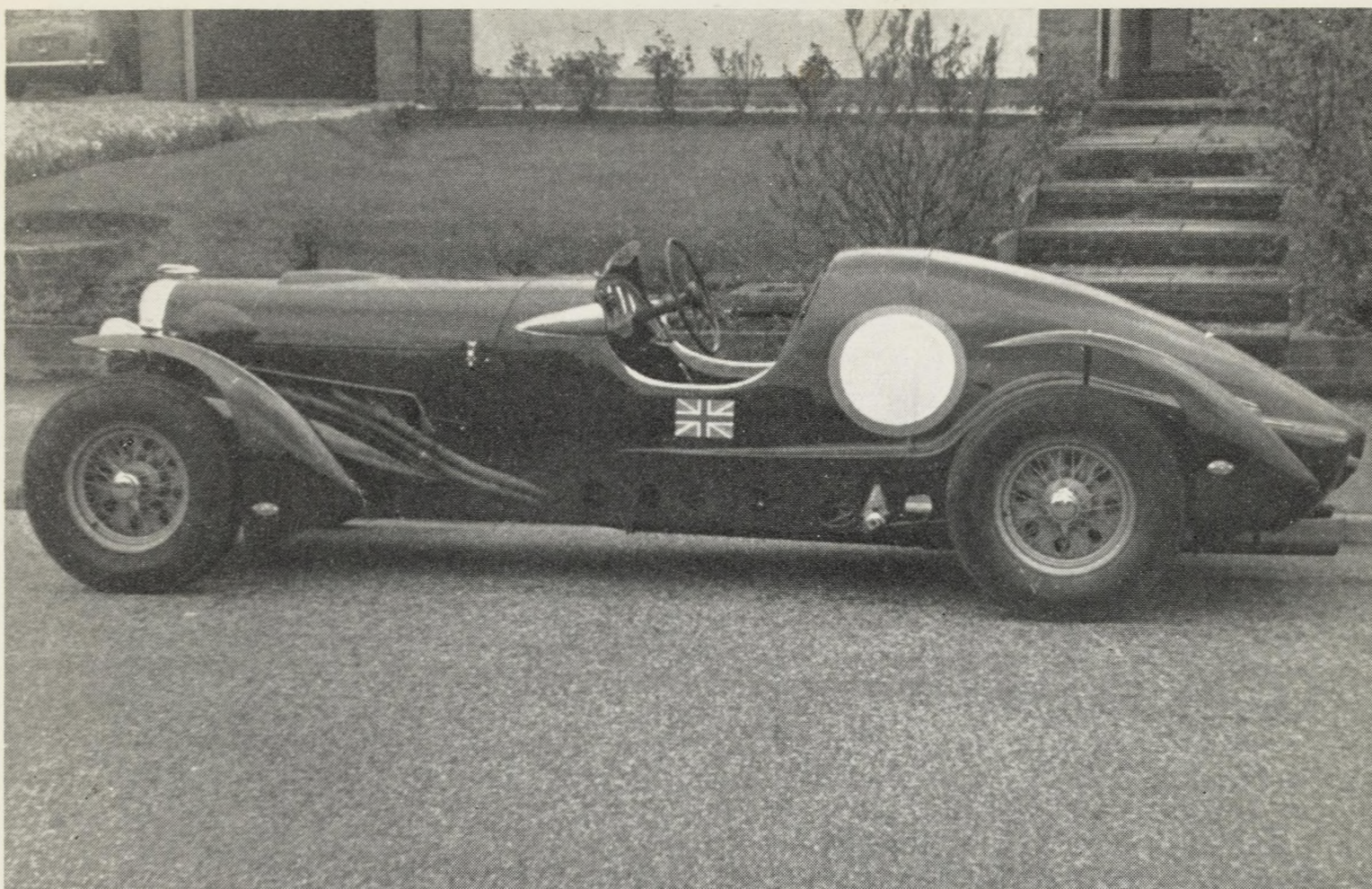
One such worthy was Nigel Hall who of course eventually built his own Lag.

We leave the story of the car in cold storage for a while because the reason why we sold the car was to concentrate on a new project, this was to be a replica of the V.12 Le Mans cars. Unlike previous 4½-litre six team cars these were factory produced efforts beautiful of line and extremely fast, and despite the claims made by other loud-mouthed enthusiasts for other marques the V.12 Sports Racer was, or potentially was, the best British sports car of the thirties. Had the war not broken out when it did there would have been no argument, but I digress.

The body of our V.12 Le Mans was of course way beyond the skill of David and myself and this was only part of the problem, for as with the previous effort we had no basis on which to start. Eventually, however, bits were gathered together—an engine for £50 from Carlisle, a short chassis from Ted Townsley and so on. Work began in 1967 when we came to a happy arrangement with a tame and skilful panel beater. He would let us move into his premises so that we could continue with our work on the mechanical side. We therefore all worked together striking up a close beer drinking relationship. I won't enter into the ins and outs of the rebuild as it was all rather complicated, and talking about ins and outs reminds me that David got himself married around this time, and for a while found the mysteries of women more interesting than the mysteries of V.12 engines! The car was eventually finished in a bit of a hurry and appeared at the 1968 April Silverstone. She really was a beautiful car and our panel beater had certainly done an excellent job. The inevitable teething troubles with the car were quickly sorted out and she commenced circulating the racing tracks somewhat quicker than our old racer. However later in 1968 I sold my interest in the car to David and was thinking about attempting a new project. By this time also Alan Brown had joined us and together we had collected a useful stock of 4½-litre spares, several tons in fact.

January 1969 saw us moving to 'new' premises with our panel beater friend and on the same day the keel plate was laid of an exciting new motor, this time Alan Brown was my partner. As most people in the North know, Alan is a fountain of wisdom which pours in endless streams from his mouth, which in itself is the centrepiece of a rugged character full of latent energy. I was





The V 12 in May 1968

*Photo: David Hine*

therefore happy to have this powerhouse of sweat and honest toil working with me, using his hands as well as his mouth. What we did was take an LG.45 chassis shortened to 9 feet and liberally drilled with holes. In this we placed a pre-selector box, a fully balanced engine minus clutch, and a raised compression ratio together with larger carbs and any other go faster goodies we could think of. The radiator height was reduced by 4" and the whole lot clothed with a rather attractive body of our own design. The outfit weighed 22 cwt. which was over our 20 cwt. limit but nevertheless lighter than anything done before. At the end of all this I didn't like the car, 'things' happened, and experiencing the excitement of the steering wheel coming off in my hands at 70 m.p.h. is something I prefer to try and forget. In reality we had boobed a bit and designed the cockpit on the small side for me, but okay for Alan because he is only 4 ft. 3 in. tall.

Once again I parted company with a partner and sold my share in the car. As part of the deal I re-possessed the old original special, now decidedly dog-eared and fitted with a rather worn out engine with a reputed compression ratio of

4.5:1 but very reliable as of course it would be!

About this time (September 1970) the rest of our band that would eventually form the syndicate had come together, but for the time being we still shared the same property with the panel beater who had expanded his business considerably. John Davenport was working on his LG.45R. David Hine the V.12, Alan the pre-selector Special. Nigel Hall was starting work on his 4½-litre. Nigel is now quite well known but in those days was famous only for his ability in being able to belch for ten uninterrupted seconds. It was obvious that a lad possessed of this sort of talent would settle down well with us. About this time also Alastair Barker arrived on the scene and layed an LG.45 chassis down for his rebuild. Rumour had it that Lagonda chassis were not the only things layed by Barker in the garage, and he seemed somewhat upset when I removed my LG.6, the interior of which held such a fascination for him!

In September 1970 I decided that really I was a 'loner' and would build the new car completely by myself. In truth I had never found the ideal combination of road car and racer. I therefore



had a bit of a think which is unusual for me, and finally decided that I wasn't interested in having the fastest car but inclined to the view that a nice well prepared car, simple mechanically, comfortable and with luggage accommodation was best. As I was doing the whole job myself it had to be simple and what more simple thought I than a sort of copy of the M.45R Fox and Nichol team cars. I don't suppose I have ever been wildly enthusiastic about the appearance of these cars, but the tail fin was a rather nice touch even if the design had been lifted from Alfa Romeo!

Remember those of you who haven't as yet closed the magazine on me and moved on to *Men Only*, *The Naturlist*, *Beano* or whatever else Lagonda Club members read, that my chassis was longer by 6" than that of the team cars so I would not build an exact replica—not that I intended to do so anyway. Ivan sold me a beautiful M.45 radiator complete and I set to work. I have never enjoyed building a car so much. The old body was removed off the chassis and was stored away just in case somebody might like it (someone did!) I had all the mechanical parts for the job so there was no problem here. The weeks passed and my motor car grew as it should of done—I was spending about fifteen hours a week on it. You really do see something for your work. I can never understand how some enthusiasts are able to do the odd hour now and again then leave it for six months, and finally take so long over the job that they are too old to enjoy the finished result. But then of course I suppose that I could be wrong and perhaps take it all too seriously, but I digress again.

I spent 276 hours in building the "Fire Engine" from September to the following May. The car I fully trimmed inside and fitted with aero screens and also a pull fold flat screen. P 100 headlamps and two matching pre-war spotlights filled up the front end. Originally when built the car had an exhaust system running along the side of the body but I have scrapped this in favour of the standard Lagonda manifold with the plumbing carried under the car. This probably cost me some 315 b.h.p. but is a lot neater. All these creature comforts have turned it into a car somewhat heavier than its racing stable mates. Five cwt. heavier than the pre-selector car and 2 cwt. heavier than the V.12 and Nigel's car. Nevertheless she is great fun to drive and when the new engine is finally sorted should give me some good sport.

In May 1971 the "Lagonda Car Syndicate" was officially formed when we moved to our own premises with room for eleven Lagondas. We also opened a joint banking account and had letterheads bearing the legend "Old Time Motors" printed to enable us to purchase spares at trade prices. We also took on a full time panel beater to look after our cars, for apart from building racers we also restore and own standard models.

As I said in the beginning the years roll on and we all get older. Brown's hair has turned grey and Hine has lost a portion of his. Barker can no longer see his feet, etc., and a few more lines cross Davenport's face. Nigel shaves occasionally, whilst the writer covers ever increasing parts of his face with hair to hide all the evidence! Some of the group have begot children and married, some have done it the other way round! Some are still single. In view of this perhaps the blind enthusiasm of the past has given way to a more measured approach. It is true that time for most of the group has to be shared between wife, family and cars. It is also true that as one gets older the pull of a rude programme on the TV for example seems more attractive than lying on your back screwing or unscrewing in the middle of winter. Work also intrudes and members of our group are quite often despatched to some far corner of the world, U.S.A., Europe and Africa or even Ireland. Despite all these inconveniences the evenings and weekends in the garage are looked forward to very much.

Working on Lagondas by oneself (I should know) is an enjoyable and innocent way of passing time. Doing the same thing surrounded by friends working on similar projects, swapping stories, helping each other, with Nigel endlessly lowering his compression ratio in the background is something which is very special to me—perhaps more than the others.

## SPRING MAGAZINE



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## MIDLANDS NOTES

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by Tony Wood

ALL IN ALL, IT HAS BEEN QUITE A SUCCESSFUL Midlands summer, but with all the myriad meetings it is possible to go to, it is becoming increasingly difficult to arrange a weekend outing without clashing with something of importance. However, despite this a very successful outing was arranged by the Midlands Secretary's lieutenant, Neil Frajbis, which included a pub lunch followed by a visit to the Donington Collection and a drive round the old Donington circuit. This should be fully reported elsewhere in this Magazine. This outing was a very good complement to the one earlier in the summer in the South of the area. What is needed now, are similar meetings in the East and the West, but so far there are no lieutenants in these areas. (Hint!!).

On the individual front, Witt Wittridge covered himself in glory and engine oil by driving the M.45 down to Le Mans to partake of the Vintage race meeting there. The car suffered a run big end soon after the start but proceeded to the finish at a slower rate. A slower rate to Witt, mind you, is pretty quick to most normal folk! Witt has also distinguished himself by purchasing a pile of bits which will, one day, become a Rapier. Now, as your Midlands Sec. is also the Rapier Register Registrar, this fills us with Great Joy!

Our spies tell us that the Eastern Rally run by the VSCC, was graced by the presence of Stuart Pettifer with his 2-litre Continental. Stuart is a fairly regular Meriden Pub Meet attender, where his non-prowess with cream crackers is legendary. No details of his prowess at Rallies is yet forthcoming however.

The Midlands Sec. himself, went on the Rapier Register jaunt to Germany in July, and all five Rapiers got back safely, though not without a few traumatic moments, the worst of which was, perhaps, the theft of the Mid. Secretarial Rapier in Heidelberg. It was retrieved, though, but don't mention it to Berndt Andrae's wife, Helga: she comes from Heidelberg! The next issue of the Magazine should include an account of the trip if it ever gets written!

The Pub Meet at Meriden continues to flourish, and it may be on the cards that a prize for the

best attendance over the year will be awarded. The Midlands Sec. thinks this is a Good Idea, as he is in the lead for it at present.

Finally, to end on a sad note, we were all very upset to hear of the death of Carl Nolten, who was a regular Meriden attender. He will be greatly missed.

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## *Midlands Outing 16th September*

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FOLLOWING OUR SPLENDID OUTING IN JUNE FOR lunch and crackers at the Royal Oak and wander through the grounds of Ragley Hall, there were cries of 'let's do it again'. Obviously some people do not eat in between these cream cracker sessions.

I suggested that the next outing should take place in the Northern sector of the Midland Section and was promptly volunteered to organise it.

Although I work for one of the Beer Factories in Burton believe it or not my initial difficulty was to find a hostelry that would at least equal the Royal Oak. The second problem was how to amuse a crowd of "Lagites" between closing and opening times.

The latter problem was soon resolved when I remembered that one Tom Wheatcroft had a collection of Historic single seater racing cars at Castle Donington. After a few telephone enquiries I had secured a party booking at a reduced charge of 75p per person instead of the usual £1 admission fee. (No, there is no truth in the rumour that I am defending the east bank of the Canal.) Having settled one venue I soon found a nearby pub that would serve lunch at a reasonable price and of course a good brew. Like most well laid plans the final details were not settled until late August which left no time to prepare a proper announcement through the Newsletter and in any case I did not know the date of the next issue. So a letter was posted to the majority of members in the Midland section, my apologies to those who did not receive a copy.





Line-up at the "Gate Inn", Osgathorpe

*Photo: Tony Wood*

Sunday 16th dawned rather gloomily and I made things worse by giving the 16/80 a wash and brush-up. However, by the time I arrived at the Gate Inn, Osgathorpe the skies were clearing and the sun saw fit to shine upon us. My short journey was uneventful but slow because it was the 16/80's first outing since its engine re-build and, like mum with her first born, I was listening for any unusual noises or signs of distress.

By opening time an orderly queue had formed at the bar door ready to consume the first pint of the day. There was certainly a better turn out of real motor cars this time. Berndt Andrae M.45, Robin Colquhoun 2-litre, Stuart Pettifer 2-litre Continental, George Beedham and Harry Taylor in their respective 3-litre DB Saloon and Tourer. Tony Wood in his Rapier and last but by no means least the Wittridges in their Speed Six Lorry and Mini Petrol Bowser. Witts M.45 was still undergoing surgery after its excursions to Le Mans and was therefore excused for bringing that other vehicle. Unfortunately Les Burton and Ben Martin could not be with us due to prior commitments. As a point of interest Ben reports the wood core plug that we fitted in June to his S.S. is still intact after a couple of thousand miles

of hard motoring.

At 1.00 p.m. 28 hungry persons sat themselves down for an excellent lunch of soup, choice of Duck, Chicken, Beef or Gammon, heaps of vegetables followed by ice cream or fruit salad and coffee all for the princely sum of £1 each (children half price). Much to our surprise we also had £5 left in the Beer Kitty so a few bottles of Rose were provided to wash it down. Then we began the main event of the day and the crackers were placed before the contestants. Again the one minute barrier could not be broken and the best time of 62 seconds was made by Malcolm Cotgrave. Then to everyone's astonishment our host said that one of her waitresses had performed the task in 50 seconds. We of course demanded a re-run but the young lass was too shy. So there is no alternative but to return to that establishment next year for an allcomers contest.

We eventually returned to the cars to prepare for the short journey to Castle Donington Motor Museum.

A deviation to the planned route was requested by Wittridge to allow him to refuel his thirsty Speed Six. I think this was only done to prove that Barbara's van was not a petrol Bowser.



When we arrived at the Donington Collection we found a party of Delage folk enjoying an afternoon's driving tests on part of the old circuit, but there was still plenty of room for us. A few more members who were unable to attend the lunch were awaiting our arrival.

We paid our 75p, collected our glossy catalogue and then wandered through a beautifully presented collection of cars ranging from a 1931 Type 51 Bugatti to Jackie Stewart's 1972 Tyrrell-Cosworth-Ford. Their latest acquisition was a 1937 W125 Mercedes and if my memory serves me correctly it was the actual car driven by Dick Seaman at Castle Donington. There were also a number of Maseratis dating from 1933 to the 250F Model, Ferraris, BRM's, Lotus Cosworths, Coopers, Porsche, Gordini, Osca, Connaught, ERA's, Vanwall and very many others. A notable thing about the whole collection was the silent respect it received from the visitors, even the small children present were not making a fuss or putting their sticky fingers on the cars. It is certainly a collection worth seeing. After an hour or so of careful study of the exhibits, discreet enquiries were made to see if we could visit any part of the old circuit. To our delight and pleasure we were told we may take our cars on to the track but were warned to beware of pot-holes since the re-surfacing had not been completed. Undaunted by this prospect and having total disregard for our suspension we hurriedly returned to our cars eager to retrace the tyre tracks of those great conductors of yesteryear namely Nuvolari, Caracciola, Seaman and Rosemeyer to name but a few. We set off in line ahead formation to Starkey Hill and then we were confronted with a problem. Some thought they should continue straight on whilst others preferred to turn right on to another part of the track. The result was two lines of cars approaching Starkey's Hairpin, from opposite directions!!! A quick bit of thinking and cross country motoring by Team B got us all going round the bend, in the same direction. We then traversed a section of the re-surfaced track through Red Gate Lodge but the last mile was on an unmade surface. By this time Robin Colquhoun had taken the lead and urged on by his family disappeared into the distance. My youngsters bouncing about on the back seat ordered me to give chase so with one eye on the oil pressure the other on the rev. counter and my wife taking soundings of the pot holes, we pressed on into second place. Everyone completed the course

somewhat breathless and with suspensions intact. We all agreed that we must do it again but not until the whole of the track had been re-surfaced. It was certainly a very pleasant and novel way to conclude the day's outing.

As a reminder I would mention that the Pub Meet for the Northern part of the Midland Section now takes place at the Gate Inn at Osgathorpe the third Tuesday of the month. Osgathorpe is about halfway between Ashby and Kegworth on the B5324 and only 3 miles from the M1 motorway.

It is a well established meet, averaging about nine members and friends and we would be very pleased to see other members who live in Leicester, Notts and Derbyshire areas.

NEIL FRAJBIS

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## COMPETITION NOTES

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IT WILL BE NICE TO THINK THAT BY THE TIME YOU read this article the Lagonda is back in the garage being fettled in anticipation of the start of the 1974 Competition season! If it isn't then I make the suggestion as an idea because the dark winter months when so many cars are off the road being protected from ice, snow not to mention salt, is the time to do those several jobs which make one's car reliable when asked to give that little bit extra out on the track or in a rally.

My last article for the Editor covered some comments towards the close of the racing season with only Llandow to be run. This was a most satisfactory meeting and congratulations are again due to Iain Macdonald who entered three races at this meeting, won his 10 lap scratch race at the tremendous speed of 72.87 m.p.h. and in so doing brought his points total to 72 in the *Motor Sport* Brooklands Memorial Trophy, took 1st place, a cheque for £75 together with a number of other "goodies". He beat Moffat running Bugatti and ERA into 2nd place and Footitt with the Cognac Special into 3rd. Remembering Iain has only used the one car during the season as against others competing for this Trophy driving up to three vehicles, this is a splendid performance, especially as he managed to maintain a reasonable handicap throughout the season. There must be a secret, perhaps we should all be told.



I should also mention that David Fletcher-Jones drove extremely well in his Lagonda Rapier to win the Spero Trophy at something over 70 m.p.h. beating the well known MG Midgets of Tieche and Coles. I make no apology for mentioning this, as David is not a Club member, it being the first time a Lagonda has won this award although a number of placings have been obtained by Rapiers. This is where I wear my other hat as Secretary of the Rapier Register, after all a Lagonda taking the honours can only be a good thing for all of us.

I did take the 3-litre and family to the start of the Eastern Rally run by the VSCC and centred on Northampton. There was again a full entry and as it happened, a bright fine October Sunday. It was a great surprise to discover eight Lagondas taking part which made up 11 per cent of the entry. It is worth mentioning the people and their cars and they are:

Pettifer—2-litre Lagonda  
Clarke—3-litre Lagonda  
Grindell—4½-litre Lagonda  
Colquhoun—2-litre Lagonda  
Odell—11.9 Lagonda  
Woollard—2-litre Lagonda  
Foster—2-litre Lagonda  
Kingston—2-litre Lagonda

Results are not yet to hand although I do know Ian North navigating for a friend in a 3-litre Bentley obtained an award, no doubt getting in some practice for a future occasion.

The Eastern Rally was thought provoking as one wonders why a good Lagonda Club entry can be attracted by the VSCC, when we tried and failed three times in our efforts to run the Wilbur Gunn!

Finally, those people who are contemplating competing next year who know I do not have them on my list please drop me a line so they can be included for regulations.

1974 will contain an exciting programme and there will be great emphasis on the running of Finmere and a full entry for our race at Silverstone. Thought is also being given to our approach to VSCC Meetings along the lines of co-ordinated entries, to get the best number of our cars in the same race. If any Member has any other ideas which could be incorporated, please let me know.

JOHN BATT

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## Mumm's Jolly

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IT'S HAPPENED AT LAST. WE'VE ACTUALLY MANAGED to get a team of Lagonda's into the heart of France (Reims-Champagne country in fact), and home again, all in one piece.

Our first attempt failed, as it had been planned for mid-summer (hot weather—good for drinking champagne), when all English plan their holidays and travel abroad, so booking all ferries. On reflection, October was much the best time to go—Clear roads and beautiful autumn scenery.

We left on the 12th October from Newhaven, having arranged to meet at the ferry terminal. We nearly all made it! Mike Gaber in his well-loaded 2-litre was held up in a traffic jam in Newhaven and was not able to catch us up till after midnight at our over-night stop in Cleves. The rest of us rolled onto the ferry at 11.30. Mike Hallows with his pretty 2-seater 16/80 with dicky, Alan Elliott with his 2-litre, Roland Morgan with his 2-litre and the invincible Robbie Hewitt with her immaculate 3-litre.

The weekend started off as it was meant to carry on, and the first bottle of Mumm Champagne arrived while we were on the high seas to Dieppe. When we arrived, we paraded through the streets in high spirits and ready to go. Before we left the town we thought it best to buy a quantity of maps, which no one had thought to bring, to ensure that we all followed the same route on the 300 km drive to Reims.

Our first night was spent at the renowned hotel and museum in Cleves, the Cheval Noir. Jacques Picken's hospitality is well known among European vintage drivers and discussions went on late into the night. Gaber's car with Chalky White, the official photographer, and James May, mechanic extraordinaire, was due to arrive at 11 o'clock and an all out effort was made to wait for them, but by 1 o'clock the numbers had dwindled to one, and *he* wasn't sure whether he could make the stairs to bed!!

The following day meant an early start. We all breakfasted at 7.30 and were lined up for the groups photograph by 8 o'clock. The journey from Cleves to Reims was under 250 km and we had allowed ourselves five hours. This was meant to allow for stops for champagne, petrol, cham-





pagne, breakdowns, champagne, lunch, etc. We soon found that it was not easy to keep five Lagondas in line together on the French roads. The weather had turned very cold overnight and there were several early stops to put up hoods, sidescreens, as well as digging out the rugs, hot coffee and flasks of brandy.

The journey progressed and our first scheduled stop took place at eleven o'clock just outside Sossian. The venue chosen was an exposed turnip field. The ladies in the party were very relieved (excuse the pun), to see that cover was supplied by a mountainous pile of turnips. Bottles and 1 magnum were brought out and the Saturday morning elevenses party began. Soon bonnets had been lifted and members of the team were in deep discussion on proposed rebuilds, etc. All the members of our team and their passengers seemed in high spirits in spite of the very cold morning and the difficult conditions we had experienced so far on the journey. (These consisted mainly of the continual battle to stay ahead of the double length French lorries and also to keep in sight of the car in front.)

The lunch break came at one o'clock, only half an hour from Reims. The hot soup and steaks

were very welcome and while having our fill in the restaurant the village occupants surrounded the cars, giving them sometimes too close an inspection.

We roared into Reims—on time—at 3.30, and after finding our way through the back streets to Maison Mumm, lined up in their forecourt to enable the local press and trade press to take all the necessary pictures.

From that moment on we were in the expert hands of the directors of Mumm. The tour of the twelve miles of cellars was extremely interesting for all members, none of whom had been round a champagne cellar before. The full history of the product along with the explanation of the lengthy process was revealed, and the hour's guided tour ended with a sampling which turned into the makings of a very good party.

Rooms had been booked in the centre of Reims, and at 6 o'clock in the evening we all returned there for a quick wash and brush-up before returning to Maison Mumm for the celebration dinner being given in our honour. The hotel seemed comfortable enough, and cheap for France at just over £3 bed and breakfast. The management were slightly confused when they



found three rooms still vacant after we had taken up all the rooms that we had booked. It wasn't till the morning that we discovered that some of the double rooms booked had single beds in as well, and, true to Lagonda form, members saw a chance to save money. It was certainly a good way of making new friends, as two of the team found out!!

The dinner turned into a banquet and certainly no expense had been spared. A different type of champagne was served with each course and I think by the end of the evening most people had seen enough. It even managed to floor some people, but on the whole, the Lagonda boys stood the pace well. The evening eventually came to an end after several large ports and brandies we began staggering home.

Although in advanced stages of inebriation, for many the evening had only just begun. There are numerous individual stories, and there is certainly not enough room to relate them here. Suffice it to say that there was much drunkenness in Reims in the very early hours of the morning, much changing of bedrooms at the hotel (for some of us it seemed almost like Crewe station).

The following morning there were many white faces checking their cars over for the journey home. The cold Sunday morning air quickly changed all that and we were soon rolling along the road we had come down the day before.

ROBIN WODEHOUSE

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## Thoughts on bearings

by Henry Coates

TURN MR. DAVID BROWN'S LATER ASTON MARTIN engine upside down, and take off the sump—or do the same for a two or three litre Lagonda of pre-war days—and there is a hearty looking crankshaft with a nice strong web between each throw and a bearing. Looks grand doesn't it? I mean to say—what could be better?

But not everyone has thought the same. The great Mr. Bentley fitted all his original engines with a bearing between each throw, but when in the mid '30's he had a free hand to design the best engine he could with perhaps more money available than he had ever had before, he put in twelve cylinders, but economised on bearings.

Herbert Austin fitted up his heavy twelve with five bearings—and one's limited experience of the car left the impression of a rather rough engine—his 16 h.p. model with seven bearings, or had it eight as had the Austin 20—an extra one outside the timing gear—was smooth though. But the little 7 only graduated to more than two bearings in its last year or two of currency. Think of that little two bearing shaft, with no counter-balance weight, whirling for 24 hours as it did many times in double twelve races at Brooklands.

Then it was Raymond Mays who decided that the Riley 6 was good enough to form the basis of the E.R.A. and it had only three bearings for a six throw crank; whilst what Freddy Dixon made his two bearing nine do in the way of revs was almost beyond belief. Percy Riley wanted as few wiggles in the shaft as possible, so as each bearing needed a couple more wiggles he cut down on the bearings. Even Dr. Porsche got away with three bearings in his quite brisk Austro-Daimler, while the Arab—a 2-litre designed officially by Reid Railton, but with a bit of Parry Thomas influence used only two bearings in an engine with a stroke as long as 127 mm. There was a Renault in the mid '30's R.A.C. rating 17 plus that used two bearings only.

Even Derby had doubts once. In developing the original 20 h.p. Rolls into the 4½ Bentley, they kept coming up against the old bogey of torsional vibration each time they tried a few more revs. They went so far as to build an engine identical in every way with their then best, but with four main bearings instead of seven—and got another 500 revs free of torsional vibration. Of course they put the bearings back and got the revs some other way, but it was food for thought. So next time you set about designing your perfect engine don't just imagine that all you have to do to get a sound bottom end is to put in all the bearings you have room for. One can well imagine a not very rigid crank with innumerable throws threshing itself out of the strongest bearings. The answer must be in the shaft itself—rigid and properly balanced—and if you think you will do that best by putting a nice big counterweight opposite each throw, just look at your Aston-Martin, Jaguar or Rolls (modern) crank—there will probably be four—two opposite the centre throws and two somewhere nearer the ends of the shaft, and opposite the first two. And don't forget to hunt up some of Dr. Fred Lanchester's note books to see what he thought of balance.





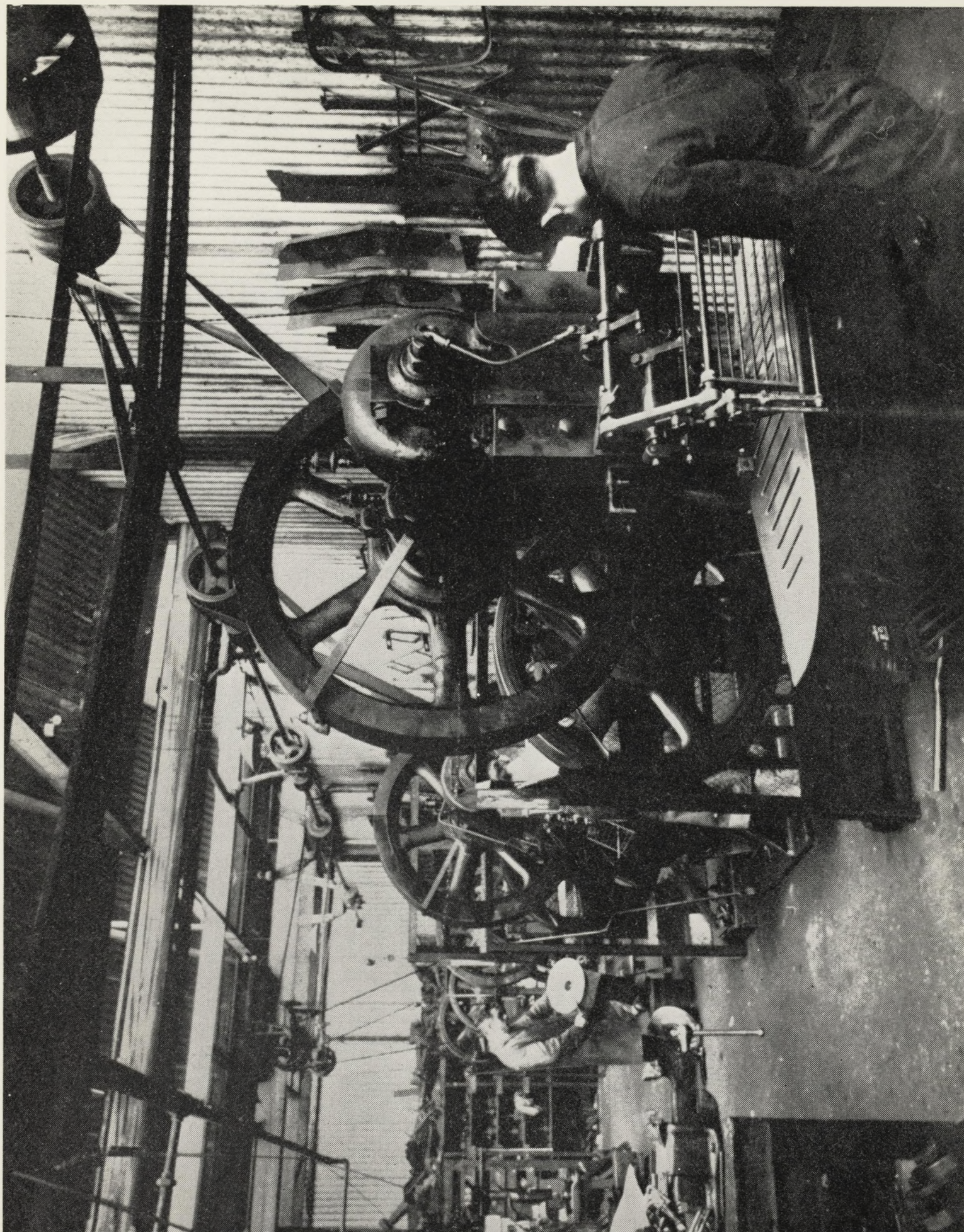
## Lagonda Days—40 years ago

OUR LOOK BACK INTO THE PAST CONTINUES WITH this view of the Stores at Staines. Mr. Lanning, the tall man in the centre, was Stores Chief at this time. He was in the Guards in the 1914/18 war

and no March 8th ever passed without him commenting on the great battle on the Western front that broke out on that date in 1918. On the next page is a photo of the Press Shop which had a reputation for producing good quality pressings.

Our thanks go to Arthur Thatcher for supplying these notes to these interesting photographs.





"Lagonda Days" . . . see previous page





A happy Iain Macdonald receives the Brooklands Trophy from Mrs. Boddy

Photo: "Motor Sport"

## Champion!

AT THE VSCC LLANDOW RACE MEETING IAIN MACDONALD received that trophy plus £75 plus a magnum of Cordon Rouge. Many members must wish they had been at his first local pub-meet thereafter. It must have been quite a night! And he will be very welcome at ours any last Tuesday that he can manage to come down from Northumberland to North 'umberside.

Hull and East Riding members take it upon themselves, on behalf of every other member and Lagonda lover, to congratulate Iain on his outstanding 1973 season, in particular on being the first holder of the new VSCC Fox and Nichol Trophy, and most especially for scoring most points from the whole of the VSCC racing season to win the *Motor Sport Brooklands Memorial Trophy* which must be recognised as the world's premier award for this type of motor sport. Surely this makes the most splendid publicity for

Lagondas today, and really shows where they belong. For instance, *Motor Sport* for October had a couple of colour pictures of Iain and his car, plus one black and white, together with a report by William Boddy who is behind the award scheme. In order that our widespread membership may know something of the background to all this, in October an invitation was addressed to me, by some co-incidence, to submit this contribution.

Well, dear readers, some years ago Lagonda entries in VSCC races were comparatively sparse from the north. Since then there has been a steady growth of interest with really keen members achieving increasing success. There were the Jon Abson/Elliot Elder years, and they are now returning. (I'll never forget spectating near Maggott's for a scratch race when our present Chairman could not possibly have been on the front row of the grid with all those genuine pre-war works racing cars entered, yet first time round the first corner the order was ERA, ERA, Jon's Rapier and Footit's 2-litre AC-engined special, ERA, etc, etc.)



The first Schofield/Hine Le Mans replica had some useful seasons, and other interesting 'new' Lagondas subsequently appearing have been their V.12 Le Mans replica and further sixes from the Lagonda Northern Syndicate, also Robart's special from the south. In the more compact category have been Paul Morgan's Eccles type Rapier, the Woodbatt Special, and T. Blisshen's. Since his beautiful red Rapier came out Fletcher-Jones has notched up quite a few firsts. Back amongst the heavies appeared the LG.45 and LG.6 Specials of Townsley and Tomlin. There have been others. Throughout all these years President J. W. T. Crocker has been a most faithful entrant, and in his Rapier three years ago he was a leading contender for the Brooklands. Remember that race when he was off scratch ten seconds behind a G.P. Bugatti. He came through, caught up with the Bug on the last corner, and dead-heated for first place\*. At the end of 1970 he finished second in the Brooklands. At the end of 1971 a different member was second, Bob Alexander and his M.45. Second place for two consecutive years. Yes, Lagonda drivers were coming to the forefront... and many of their competition cars had been looked at by a thoughtful Iain Macdonald.

His own special, number plate FPK 7, emerged at VSCC July Silverstone in 1970, though I first saw it in the paddock a year later. Shortly afterwards I saw it again, in a spin at Copse, and just in front of me! Iain was not completely satisfied with it and spent much time and thought on its further development.

I think of him primarily as a racing man. He will admit to having had a schoolboy passion to have a racing car—I had the same feeling myself and it must have been about the same time. When he left school he worked, fortunately for us, almost opposite the Lagonda factory in Staines where naturally he saw a lot of the 4½-litre cars there, and promised himself that some day he would have one. After the war most of his time was taken up in earning a living and educating a son but during the fifties things got a bit easier and he looked around for interesting things to do. He learned to fly and had some fun in aeroplanes. He bought a dinghy and went in for racing that. But John was growing up with keen interest in cars so father began to remember the desires of his youth and determined to buy a 4½-litre Lagonda. Early in 1959 he joined the Lagonda Club to beg information about 4½-litre cars for

sale. I joined about the same time but I snapped up a Lagonda first, my M.45 heavy tourer, so that one was no longer available. Iain compiled a list and actually insured one of them because by the photograph supplied by that vendor, that was the car he was sure he would buy, and he would want to drive it home in accordance with the law. Together with Beryl he saw some pretty tired Lagondas before he finally arrived to see this last one. After a trial run of three or four miles he bought it on the spot. Proud owner of DPH 610, they stayed overnight, taxed it early next morning, and set off, legally covered, for home. Home being Newcastle of course. The car was bought in St. Ives and taxed in Truro, nearly 500 miles away. Seemingly they were in luck. Two incidents happened on their way north. Iain's new ciné camera was left behind in an embarrassing place (I had a new ciné camera in 1959 too) but was immediately sent on by an honest management. Later there was a severe emergency stop and the accident was averted. When Iain examined the car on arrival at its new home he found the flexible linkage to the front brakes had only one strand of the wire rope unbroken. He embarked upon a complete rebuild, worked hard and fast, took out his first racing licence in 1960, and won one of our major trophies.

Now nearing sixteen years of age, young John begged for a motorcycle. As father considered himself lucky to be alive after some of his experiences with motorcycles, he steered Macdonald Junior away from two wheels with the promise of four on his seventeenth birthday. So it came to pass, in January 1961, on the coldest day of the year, they drove a newly acquired car south over the Lammermuir Hills on roads treacherous with ice. This experience convinced Iain of the magnificent roadholding of Rapiers, and John was soon having to lend his own car to father to try on the track. Iain will confess that it is confusing to do a quick change from the high revver with pre-selector to the low rev torque with right hand gearchange; but at critical moments they both had the accelerator in the middle.

The years passed to 1972 and BDC Silverstone, where both Macdonalds competed. Father was two places behind John in Race 1, which John won in his modern Morgan. I expect it was an easy change from a Rapier to a Moggie. Father's turn came in the Lagonda and VSCC Members' races. He drove FPK 7 to first place in both. Then John did a little one-upmanship in breaking



the Silverstone lap record for a +4 Morgan. Iain thought it would have been a very good thing if he had set up a new lap record too. At any rate, the writing was on the wall for Iain, the next season, and the VSCC.

1973 began with the Vintage April Silverstone. Iain began by qualifying comfortably in the Hour-blind, and then collected two firsts. During the day Paul Morgan, supercharged Rapier, had a first and Nigel Hall, LG.45, two second places. Unsupercharged Jon Abson was second to Paul. Local members present thought this augured for a very good Lagonda season, and so it has proved. At Oulton Park Race 8 included entries from three LG's and five Rapiers, Iain having been in 1 and 7. Then at July Silverstone six 4½-litre cars entered for the new Fox and Nichol Trophy race. To make absolutely sure that this was won by the most appropriate make Lagondas were first and second, Iain having closely led Alan Brown for the last few laps. This was the former's third win towards the Brooklands and it gave him 54 points.

On the grid the appearance of Iain Macdonald is somewhat enigmatic. He races wearing a casual type of leisure jacket and prefers a visor to goggles. His helmet is not painted to match his car or his shirt. He doesn't bother with go-faster gloves. He doesn't bother to strip his car of wings or headlamps. The only adjustment he considers necessary there is to flip his number-plate to the windcheating horizontal position. Modestly his car displays a ring round his competition number. To most spectators he can well be a novice. They revise that impression the split second the starter drops the Union Jack, they then see the experienced racing man.

Please do not think of Iain only as a racing man. He's been entering other events over the years. As a change from motoring the length of the country to reach the various meetings, he wished there was a more local event. There wasn't. But Iain is not only a competitor. He devised an event of his own in 1961 and called it the Border Rally. Richard Hare quickly appointed him a regional secretary after that, and he's been Border Secretary and Border Rally Chief ever since. All who have enjoyed any of his Border Rallies must appreciate his ability to organise that enjoyment. The first time I went he had just flown in from a Transatlantic business trip. He ran the rally, then continued to South Africa. How's that for organisation? I really liked his rally HQ at the Collingwood Arms, and I've had several family

holidays there retracing the best sections of his various routes.

Regular readers of the *Lagonda Magazine* will have read Iain's contributions in this direction; letters, technical advice, and reports on meetings. When he was asked for a report on one of his Border Rallies he had competed in that one himself. Perfect host that he is, his own name was bottom of the results sheet. Efficient cooling is a problem on so many 4½-litre Lagondas. At Silverstone I remember Jenks in BPK 203 cooling off at a remote trackside rather than finishing, and later there was discussion in the paddock. After another issue of the magazine there was an advisory article on cooling, above the name of Iain Macdonald.

Last year my own engine developed serious symptoms at the BDC meeting and Ken Pape towed me home. After a reasonable interval I received an envelope with a Newcastle postmark. Was I back on the road? Did I need any spares? The expert on cooling has a warm enough heart.

He is an enthusiastic engineer, witness the design and development of his new special. (Please form an orderly queue for a "Macdonald camshaft" as mentioned by William Boddy in *Motor Sport*.) This Macdonald jets about the world because he is in drilling, among the hard stuff and the hard men, using diamond drills. He got into this business not as a professional engineer as one might easily suppose, not as a geologist, but as an accountant. So it's not that he cannot afford to be upgraded to a National competition licence. I think this is a bit of a joke, he lightheartedly refers to it as inverted snobbery, but the fact is he was racing long before the present system was introduced. There are so many engaging facets to this club personality. Did he not, for a laugh, use a spare spade for his pit signals at Oulton Park?

It is too easy to imagine Iain visiting one of those drilling rigs. There would be a steel helmet over that characterful face. He'd be solving problems, making decisions, calling a spade a spade, rattling out instructions, and telling those concerned to get on with the job, or else... Yet however hard he might drive others, I feel that he will drive himself harder, professionally and otherwise—as he drives his cars. See him set off from scratch, catch up on a whole gaggle of cars and pick his way through them passing right left and centre, and you have seen a Driver.

My own first meeting with him, which I am



positive he will not remember, was at Sandtoft in the days when Henry Coates was its organiser. I remember standing in admiration and awe before his desirable tourer bought all that time ago in Cornwall and still used even last winter as his everyday car. Surely a car in that superb condition would not be subjected to the hurly-burly and dust of Henry's tests. I was suddenly surprised and brought down to earth to hear, "The b----- thing's boiled all the way from New-castle."

He had no such problem on the grid at Llandow. He had other problems. The *Motor Sport* Brooklands Trophy depended entirely on Iain's last race. True, there were those 54 points under his belt, but Hamish Moffatt had by then notched up 57. However, Hamish had packed up for the day and was not on that grid. Cranage was though. Cranage had won a scratch race at Silverstone at 69.21 m.p.h. the day that Iain had won the Fox and Nichol—at 67.31. If the Lagonda should hesitate, it was goodbye to that trophy. Iain was sweating, and not only with the sunshine. The Lagonda did hesitate. It stalled on the grid. But he soon overcame that. Then Cranage in the MG did pass him. Iain gave a demonstration of really press-on driving and passed the MG. Cranage managed fastest lap, but Iain held him off. It was our member's trophy after all. He motored smartly off the track, flipped up his numberplate so that all might read FPK 7, removed his jacket, put on his Lagonda Club tie, vintage model and not the modern apology, met Winifred Boddy, received his spoils, and had his picture taken†, all before everyone had returned to the paddock.

1973 began well enough. It has finished with this crowning achievement. To my knowledge this has been the finest sporting year for Lagondas within the VSCC.

Now let us ponder one or two other aspects of our driver. It was his all-or-nothing year. Every point he scored came from a first place, not for him the tactics of regularly playing for a second or third place to cannily conserve his car and collect sufficient points to pass the others when they blow up. Neither did he restrict his entries solely to races counting towards the Brooklands. Most of our members, I imagine, are also members of the VSCC and know the names of their illustrious racing stars. We hear of them amas-

sing their collections and winning a race in one of their several very expensive cars, or else driving a car that belongs to someone else. We enjoy watching them and they are certainly first-class drivers. We have enjoyed following Iain too. And it just is not true that he gave up business for six months to concentrate on winning. It is true that he spared neither himself nor his car. He has had his best season ever and I guess he has enjoyed it immensely, but he has also had his living to earn.

No doubt there is an extra twinkle in his eye in the knowledge that he designed his own car, he built his own car, he has raced his own car and he has raced no other car, for this award. No doubt there is an equal extra twinkle in his other eye because at the BDC meeting he did set a new Silverstone lap record, for a pre-war Lagonda. This had stood for many years to Col. Billy Michael in that very special team-car of his.

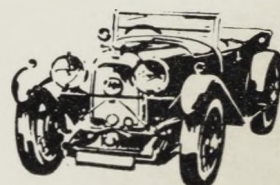
The Henry Coates Northern Trophy went to Iain in 1960 and 1962. I expect it will be there again for 1973, so I must polish it up for the hand-over. I should like to be at that particular prize-giving. Border Secretary, Clerk of the Course, Secretary of the Meeting, cooling adviser, magazine reporter, pub-meet organiser, supremely Successful Lagonda Driver, surely Iain Macdonald must be our most versatile member; I hope the Committee treat him to the annual dinner weekend.

Now, in closing, I venture to offer one other suggestion. For over forty issues this magazine's title page has listed the name I. G. Macdonald under the heading of Border Secretary. The committee might now resolve to elevate him to a higher status further up the page (He'll drill me for suggesting this!) under a new title, say, Leading Driver, or No. 1 Driver, or Captain of the Club, or Club Champion, or similar.

To Iain Macdonald, Congratulations. We have done nothing towards your outstanding success, yet we all gain a little from it since you chose to win in a Lagonda. You have done more than you realise for the Club. Many, many thanks, on behalf of all members.

ROY PATERSON

†Reproduced by kind permission of *Motor Sport*



(\*For picture see Magazine No. 70, page 5)



# The 1903 Gordon Bennett Race and The Irish Fortnight

by T. R. NICHOLSON

AS A RESULT OF THE WIN BY S. F. EDGE'S NAPIER IN the 1902 event, held over the Paris-Innsbruck section of the Paris-Vienna race, the 1903 contest for the Gordon Bennett Trophy could be held in Britain.

It did not by any means follow that it would be, for the growth in numbers of cars on the road had increased public opposition to them. Before 1900, they were the province of a tiny handful of fanatics, and were regarded as a rather nasty joke. By 1903, they had ceased to be funny. The anti-motorists were not all either cranks or upholders of vested interests in the industries appertaining to the horse. Most of the antagonistic sentiment was the outcome of a strong general conservatism, ill-defined and instinctive, roused to militancy by several pretty well inevitable circumstances. The leisurely tenor of life on Britain's roads, disturbed from half a century's sleep only recently by the relatively innocuous bicycle, was now being shattered by machines that often went misleadingly faster than other vehicles, that raised more dust, and that produced disagreeable noises and at least equally unpleasant smells. Most motorists were inevitably tyros and, just as inevitably, they included a certain proportion of irresponsible exhibitionists. The cars of the tyros, not easy to drive in the first place, were noisier, smokier and smellier than those of the experts, and more prone to accidents. Because the motor-car was news, some journals seized upon and inflated reports of incidents for the sake of sensation, thus exacerbating popular feeling.

Turning of blind eyes by some local authorities, who were supposed to enforce the 1896 Motor Car Act, had been encouraging the spread of short local speed events—speed trials and hill-climbs—on the open public road, during which the 12 m.p.h. limit was regularly broken by spectacular margins. However, during 1902 these competitions had begun to feel the draught. The \*ACGBI's plans to run hill-climbs in Richmond

Park in June were stopped. Their hopes to hold a second Bexhill speed meeting on August Bank Holiday, following the success of the first one at Whitsun, were likewise blighted. So was their proposed hill-climb at Dashwood in August. At other events, the plain clothes policemen almost outnumbered the spectators.

A long-distance, town-to-town race on Continental lines was out of the question. In the case of such an event, it would clearly be impossible to obtain support for the Act of Parliament that would be necessary to authorise the closing of the roads. A circuit race, involving a much shorter length of road and far easier to police, was the only other possibility, in the absence of a private track. Circuit racing was not a novel idea. The Belgians had introduced it in 1902, with their first Circuit des Ardennes race, which was repeated in 1903 a week before the Gordon Bennett. After the disaster of the Paris-Madrid race in June, circuit racing became universal, but it was already inevitable in Britain, if racing was to be conducted at all.

The ACGBI decided to try and find a course in Ireland, where anti-motoring sentiment was less vociferous, owing largely to lack of cars, and where a sparsely-populated area could more readily be found. The whole of Ireland had a mere 236 cars, giving a traffic density only one-third of that of the rest of Great Britain. The Club also circularised Irish M.P.s, clergy, landowners, local authorities, newspapers, railway companies, and hotels. It pointed out the advantages that the race would bring trade and the economy in general through the influx of visitors' money; guaranteed adequate safety measures, and emphasised that the event would be held on a public holiday that was not a Sunday, thus avoiding interference either with business or with church attendance. The response was almost entirely favourable. The sporting instincts of the Irish, which were not confined to horses, had a lot to do with it.



### The Course

Reconnaissances in late 1902 and early 1903 revealed a suitable area for a course to the south of Dublin, in the Naas-Maryborough-Carlow triangle. The course finally chosen started at Kilrush on the Athy-Naas road, passed through Ballyshannon, turned south short of Kilcullen, went through Castledermot, then changed direction north-west at Carlow for Athy. The starting-point was passed. At Kilcullen the cars would turn west, cross the Curragh to Kildare, and go on south-west to Monasterevin. The course inclined east shortly before reaching Maryborough, and pursued its way through Stradbally and Windy Gap before changing direction north to Athy and Ardsclull and coming to the start again. The total racing distance was about 328 miles, the 52-mile-long loop being covered four times and the shorter, 40-mile leg three times. Controls were to be established in the towns traversed—Castledermot, Carlow, Athy, Kilcullen, Kildare, Monasterevin and Stradbally. Here the speed of the cars was to be compulsorily reduced to 20 m.p.h. and a cyclist escort provided.

An Act of Parliament was passed that authorised the closing of these roads, the exemption of competing cars from speed limits during the race, and the exemption of local authorities from calls on their funds for road improvement. This money had to be raised privately, and by public appeal. It provided for ironing out the most dangerous hump bridges, cutting hedges, levelling road surfaces and laying dust. Most of the policing expenses were paid by Whitehall.

Nothing could be done about the inflation of hotel, camping, eating and garaging prices around and near the course. Charges were often reasonable, but at the other end of the scale was the £6 per bed per night, the £185 for a few days' rental of a small house, and the £1 asked for a bucket of water. A garage for visitors' and competitors' cars was provided in Dublin at the Earlsfort Terrace ice-rink, opposite St. Stephen's Green, from June 30th to July 1st, the day before the race, where they were on show to the public. Two official camp sites were provided on the course, and the menace of a fuel shortage was averted by the Anglo-American Oil company, which guaranteed sufficient quantities at the reasonable price of 1s. 8d. per gallon. Special trains from Dublin were laid on and a grandstand erected at Kilrush. Newspapers, local authorities and individuals offered prizes, the motoring journals prepared

elaborate coverage, and a film was to be made of the race.

The Gordon Bennett was just one of the excitements promised. It was the principal, inaugural feature of a two weeks' programme of events for motor-cycles, touring cars and racing cars of different classes, interspersed with touring and social occasions, that was christened the "Irish Fortnight."

### Gordon Bennett Competitors

What of the Gordon Bennett cars and their drivers? All the cars except the Mercedes were, of course, *grandes voitures*; full-blooded racing machines in the up to 1,000 kg. class. Two of the three places in Britain's team went to the Napiers of S. F. Edge and Charles Jarrott, on the strength of the former's victory in 1902. Edge was to drive the new K.5 Napier, of the same capacity (13.7-litres) as the 45 h.p. model of Jarrott. The third car was chosen by means of eliminating trials in England between Napier and Star cars. A speed trial was held in the private grounds of Welbeck

### FIXTURE LIST 1974

2nd March, Sat.	Club Dinner—Syon Park
29th March, Fri	Northern Dinner
27th April, Sat.	VSCC Silverstone
12th May, Sun.	Penshurst Place, Kent
12th May, Sun.	VSCC Curborough
15th June, Sat.	VSCC Oulton
*23rd June, Sun.	Rally Tour—Hants/ Dorset
*29th June, Sat.	Border Rally
*6th July, Sat.	Northern Gymkhana
13th July, Sat.	VSCC Silverstone
*14th July, Sun.	Lagonda Driving Tests, Finnere, Bucks.
20th July, Sat.	Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb
11th Aug., Sun.	VSCC Prescott Hill Climb
18th Aug., Sun.	Michelham Priory, Sussex
*24th Aug., Sat.	BDC Silverstone, Lagonda Race
7th Sept., Sat.	VSCC Autumn Race Meeting (to be confirmed)
22nd Sept., Sun.	AGM Berkshire Agricultural College
6th Dec., Fri.	Club Film Show



Park on April 25th, and a surreptitious hill-climb on Dashwood Hill on the London-Oxford road in the small hours of the morning of April 27th. The result was victory for J. W. Stocks' 45 h.p. Napier. All three Napiers chosen had four cylinders, automatic inlet valves, shaft drive and three forward speeds. As a gesture to the host country, they were painted green, which was henceforth Britain's racing colour.

The Germans were encompassed by peculiar problems of their own. The German club had intended to enter three of the new 90 h.p. Mercedes, but they had not made a promising debut in competitions, and in any case all three were burned out in a fire at the Cannstatt works in June: the worst possible last moment. Three privately-owned cars of the older but well-proven 60 h.p. dual-purpose touring and racing model were hurriedly substituted through the efforts of Emil Jellinek, who handled Mercedes sales in France, Austria-Hungary, Belgium and America. They were, of course, of much more modern design than the much-fancied Napiers, with their smaller but more efficient and responsive 9.2-litre engines with mechanically-operated inlet valves and low-tension magnetos, their four-speed, gate-change gearboxes, and low-hung, pressed-steel frames. Another of the Germans' troubles was that the club would only allow amateurs who were also club members to drive. Hired employees such as Hieronymus and Werner, proposed by Jellinek, were out. Jellinek and the club could only agree on Camille Jenatzy. In the end, Baron de Caters and Foxhall-Keene were substituted. Thus Germany went to Ireland with two Belgian drivers and one American.

The American entry, chosen after eliminating trials on Long Island, New York, consisted of Percy Owen's 8½-litre, four-cylinder Winton, Alexander Winton on his eight-cylinder, 17-litre machine (which had not, in fact, taken part in the trials), and Louis Mooers on a Peerless. Both Wintons had laterally-mounted engines. Owen's car had two forward speeds, and Winton's only one. The Peerless in the race was a fairly modern design, with a pressed-steel frame, mechanical inlet valves and full pressure lubrication, but a gilled-tube radiator on traditional lines.

The Automobile Club de France fielded two Panhards and a Mors. The formidable 11.6-litre, 80 h.p. Mors was the car that had been leading in the Paris-Madrid race when it was abandoned at Bordeaux. It used mechanically-operated

overhead inlet valves, and wore a streamlined body. Its driver was the same man, too—Gabriel. The 80 h.p. 13.7-litre Panhards also had mechanically-operated inlet valves and, as with the Mercedes and Peerless, a pressed-steel chassis frame. However, they retained gilled-tube radiators, like the Mors. The drivers were the Chevalier Rene de Knyff and Henry Farman.

Such were the twelve cars that some Irishmen were thinking had been entered by those two well-known sporting gentlemen, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Bennett, six a side.

### The Race

The first machine, Edge's Napier, left the line at Kilrush at 7 a.m. After the statutory lapse of seven minutes between each car, Rene de Knyff's Panhard followed it away. Two competitors stalled, Mooers forgot to release his handbrake, and Alexander Winton was left standing for about 40 minutes with a choked fuel feed. Foxhall-Keene's Mercedes redeemed American honour, however, by being fastest on the first circuit of the short leg. The accidents had already begun. Stocks' Napier eliminating itself on a wire barricade near Ballymoon. There was almost a spectacular smash when Jenatzy passed Owen on a narrow stretch between the Moat of Ardsclull and Kilcullen, where there was barely room to get by. At almost the same point, Alexander Winton was halted, and if all three cars had coincided there would have been disaster.

Gabriel's Mors led on the first loop, but then Jenatzy displaced him. British hopes took a knock when the steering of Jarrott's Napier broke, causing it to leave the road at 60 m.p.h., between Stradbally and Athy. Neither he nor his mechanic Cecil Bianchi was badly hurt, but being unconscious at the roadside, were thought by people on the spot to be dead. Baron de Caters sportingly stopped at Kilrush to reassure everyone.

Jenatzy's Mercedes won, at just under 50 m.p.h. Only four other cars finished, three of them the complete French team, in second, third and fourth positions; the Panhards of de Knyff and Farman leading Gabriel's Mors home. There was less than 4 m.p.h. difference between the average speeds of the first four cars. Jenatzy's victory, creditable though it was, had overshadowed the fast, consistent performance of the



French cars. Edge's Napier came in last, a long way behind. The Mercedes of de Caters and Foxhall-Keene retired with rear axle disorders. All three American cars fell out after making very little impression. So the Gordon Bennett Trophy went to Germany for the first time.

All the competitors in the Gordon Bennett race then went home, except for Gabriel, who had plans of his own, S. F. Edge and J. W. Stocks. However, the international flavour of the Irish Fortnight was preserved, at least for a while, by the appearance in the ensuing competitions of Baron de Forest, Louis Rigolly, Baron de Turckheim of De Dietrich, Thery with his 650-kg. Decauville, and the American C. Gray Dinsmore, all of them drivers of the first calibre.

### Phoenix Park

The proceedings continued in Dublin. On July 3rd, a Gymkhana, or series of driving tests, was to be held on the Ashtown track in Phoenix Park, followed by a garden party at the Viceregal Lodge and a torchlight procession through Dublin from St. Stephen's Green to the Castle. The Gymkhana was cancelled, owing to the unsafe state of the course, but the speed trials to be run off in Phoenix Park on the following day—a far more important event—were unaffected. The main road through the Park, nearly 2½ miles long and 40 feet wide, was an ideal venue, though interrupted part way by the Phoenix Monument. The railings, lamp posts and coping round this were removed, providing a fairly straight 2,850 yards; a standing mile immediately followed by a flying kilometre. Eliminating heats were run off, two cars or six motor-cycles at a time. The motor-cycle finals took place first, machines being divided into two classes according to weight. Then came the four touring-car events. That for vehicles costing up to £300 was won by E. T. Baker's 10 h.p. Duryea, at 2' 30" for the combined mile and kilometre. First in the up-to-£650 class was J. T. Overton's Georges Richard, with a time of 2' 18.4". J. W. Cross' 20 m.p.h. Humber, a conventional but remarkably fast machine, won the up-to-£1,000 category and the Edmond Johnson Trophy with a time of 2' 6.2"—representing an average speed of over 45 m.p.h. from a standing start—which was appreciably better than that of D. B. Hall's Wolseley, which carried off the over-£1,000 class class in 2' 13.6". W. J. Warren's Gardner-Serpollet walked-over in the class for steam cars.

As was normal, the racing cars were classified by weight. A. Rawlinson's Darracq *voiture legere* won the up-to-650 kg. category with a time of 2' 10". The 1,000-kg. racing machines were dominated by J. E. Hutton's 60 h.p. Mercedes (1' 26.6"), the Paris-Madrid Mors of Baron de Forest and the 1902 Paris-Vienna Mors of C. S. Rolls with 1' 29.6" and 1' 29.8" respectively. Two events over the flying kilometre only, for the *Daily Mail* and *Autocar* Challenge Cups, followed. The course was on a slight down-grade. The first was for 1,000-kg. machines, and was won by de Forest's Mors in 27.2". De Forest beat Rolls' Mors, which recorded 28". Rigolly's 100 h.p. Gobron-Brillie returned 28.4". The second open contest was won by Hutton's Mercedes in exactly half a minute, from Edge's Napier, 0.8" behind. Two special match races were then run off, Rolls' Mors winning one from Hutton's Mercedes, and Hutton beating de Forest's Mors. During the day's proceedings, Gabriel in his Paris-Madrid Mors (the third racing Mors present) achieved a time of 26.6" for the flying kilometre only to be capped by de Forest, who registered 26.4", or nearly 86 m.p.h. The Phoenix Park speed trials thus provided satisfactory sport for spectators as well as competitors, not to mention the trade: Hutton sold six Mercedes immediately afterwards, on the strength of the make's showing in the Gordon Bennett and in the Park.

### Castlewellan

July 5th, being Sunday, was a rest day. On the Monday, competitors in the Irish Fortnight toured County Down to the seaside resort of Newcastle by optional routes. Those recommended went by Drogheda and Dundalk to Newry, and then to Newcastle either through Hilltown or else through Warrenpoint and Rostrevor. Not everyone could be accommodated in Newcastle and had to put up in Belfast, Newry and other places.

On the morning of the 7th, competitors repaired to the valley of Castlewellan, near Newcastle, for a speed hill-climb in which the main event was the contest for the Henry Edmonds Trophy. The 600-yard course lay from the mill in the valley to the village of Clough, and ascended Ballybannon Hill. After an open hill-climb for motor-cycles, the touring cars were dispatched. C. T. Baker's Duryea again won its price class, in 1' 2.8", while in the £650 class there



was no contest, owing to lack of starters. The £1,000 category provided a field day for Daimlers, the 22 h.p. models of E. M. C. Instone, the Hon. John Scott-Montagu and Edward Manville taking the first three places. Instone's time was 55.8". He and Manville were "works" entries. J. Hargreaves' 20 h.p. Napier won the over-£1,000 class with the slower time of 59.4".

Rawlinson's Darracq once more took first place in the 650-kg. racing car class, with 56.4". The 1,000-kg. category was won by Alfred Harmsworth's 60 h.p. Mercedes, that had been offered by its owner as a replacement for one of the 90 h.p. works cars destroyed in the Cannstatt fire. It had not been chosen to compete in the Gordon Bennett race, but now took home the Henry Edmonds Trophy for the fastest time at Castlewellan, driven by E. Campbell Muir, who recorded 32.4". This was better by 1.4" than Rolls' Mors, while Gray Dinsmore trailed behind with 36". Herbert Austin's 50 h.p. Wolseley, which had arrived just too late for the Gordon Bennett eliminating trials, had no luck here either. No fewer than four 60 h.p. Mercedes competed: Campbell Muir's, Hutton's, Dinsmore's and G. Higginbotham's.

In the afternoon, 2½ miles of the Clough-Castlewellan road, guarded by 400 police, was used for a speed trial. It started three-quarters of a mile outside Clough and finished at the top of the steep hill leading into Castlewellan market place. It was originally intended that competitors should descend Ballybannon Hill during the trial, but this idea had been abandoned as dangerous, greatly to the annoyance of the spectators who had established themselves on the hill. After the motor-cycles, in their three weight classes, had gone up, the main event of the afternoon took place: the handicap contest among the touring cars for the *Graphic* Trophy. J. W. Cross' Humber, reasonably enough on scratch, still beat the Hon. J. Scott-Montagu's Daimler by 3' 29.8" to 3' 34.6", though giving it 1½ seconds, so went home with two trophies. Finally, the racing cars were released. Both of their events were scratch races. Rawlinson's Darracq kept up the good work, winning the 650-kg. class in 3' 24.6". Louis Rigolly's Gobron-Brillie beat J. W. Stocks' 45 h.p. Napier by 7.2" in 2' 5.4", in the 1,000-kg. contest.

### Cork and Kerry Finales

At this stage, practically all the foreigners

departed, and interest in the Irish Fortnight began to flag. After a dance at the Slieve Donard Hotel on the evening of the 7th, the competitors wended their way back to Dublin on the 8th. On the following day they started for Cork by a number of optional touring routes. Here, or rather in Queenstown (Cobh) Harbour, on the morning of the 10th, eliminating races for the first Alfred Harmsworth Cup for motor boats were held, together with other motor boat events. The surviving car contestants were treated to a speed trial on the Carrigrohane Road. The surface was rough and narrow, being confined on one side by a tram-line, but there was just room to send off two cars at a time. The distance was two miles. There was only one class for touring cars, few of the entrants having turned up. J. W. H. Dew's 6 h.p. Gardner-Serpollet won it from a 20 h.p. MMC and a 22 h.p. Daimler in 2' 7.8", displaying the formidable acceleration of steam cars. In a match race, Montagu in his 27 h.p. Daimler beat Rolls' 20 h.p. Panhard with a time of 2' 55.4". E. Brun's 20 h.p. Prunel walked over in the 650-kg. racing car class, while among the 1,000-kg. machines, Rolls' Mors saw off Hutton's Mercedes in 1' 49.6" to 1' 52.8". Austin's 50 h.p. Wolseley was third. A hill-climb proposed for Maryborough in the afternoon was called off, as the course was considered dangerous. The cars were placed on public exhibition in Cork in the evening.

The main excitement of Saturday the 11th was the final of the Alfred Harmsworth Cup race at Queenstown, over an 8½-mile course. The rules were similar to those of the Gordon Bennett car race, in that up to three vessels were accepted from each country, every part of each one had to be made in that country, and the helmsman had to be a member of the competing club. There were disappointingly few entries, but Napiers made up for some of the disappointment of the Gordon Bennett by winning the cup with S. F. Edge's boat, which was powered by a four-cylinder, 75 h.p. engine that propelled it over the course in 26' 6".

July 12th was another Sunday, so there was no programme. On the 13th competitors left Cork for a tour through Counties Cork and Kerry by optional routes, splitting up, as in County Down, when seeking their beds that night. They arrived at Killarney during the 14th, and on the following day, the last of the Irish Fortnight, they took part in a hill-climb, starting at Ballyfinane



between Killorglin and Tralee, for the County of Kerry Cup. A good stretch of four miles afforded more than enough racing space for this 1,200-yard open handicap; the distance had originally been set at 3,200 yards, but because of a poor surface and an awkward bend, it had been shortened. So had the list of starters, for only nine turned up out of 27 entrants. Rolls carried off the County of Kerry Cup in his racing Mors, with a time of 1' 1.8", beating P. G. Garrad's 22 h.p. touring Daimler, which chalked up 1' 22".

It had been suggested in the beginning that tours to various parts of Ireland should be organised after the end of the official proceedings; but clearly, there would be no one left to take part in them. So, in a rather anti-climactic atmosphere, the Irish Fortnight ended. Although it was regarded as "too ambitious," and competitors in the post-race events were plagued by early starts and long journeys over bad, livestock-infested roads, the organisation was generally excellent; there had been no serious accidents; the police and inhabitants were friendly; and the scenery was superb. The verdict was that the Fortnight had been a success, if a qualified one.

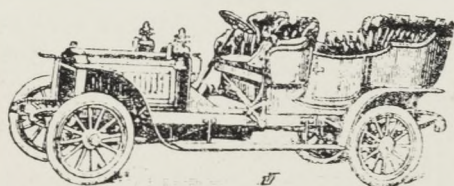
#### Author's Acknowledgements

Most of the information contained in this article is based on data in *The Motor News*, *The Autocar*, *The Automotor Journal*, *The Car Illustrated*, and Chapter 4 of the book *Gordon Bennett*, by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu. The writer is grateful to Mr. Michael Sedgwick for some of the facts and figures.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*At the comparatively early age of 35, Tim Nicholson is firmly established as the writer of a number of well-liked books on motoring history. Prolific in output and varied in range, his next book due for publication this year is The Vintage Car 1919-1930. Among other works, he is currently editor of The Lore of Cars, to be published 1968 and a contributor to Georgano's Encyclopaedia of Motor Cars also due that year.*

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#### FOR SALE

The following are available from the Secretary:

CAR BADGE New stocks awaited

LAPEL BADGE 25p (U.S. 62 cents)

TERYLENE TIE (Green, blue, maroon) £1.25 (U.S. \$3.15, o'seas £1.30)

OVERALL BADGE 60p (U.S. \$1.50)

INSTRUCTION BOOKS FOR ALL MODELS (except 11.1, 11.9 and D.B. 2.6/3-litre) £2.25 (U.S. \$6.80, o'seas £2.75)

MEADOWS ENGINE CATALOGUE — await stocks. Price to be announced

V-12 *Motor Trader* sheets—await stocks. Price to be announced

will make the journey when all the attractions including the fireworks are over.—  
July 5, 1923.

1923

#### NEW CARS ON SHOW

An exhibition of the new range of Lagonda cars is to be held at the showrooms of Wellmans Garage, St Leonard's Road, Windsor, next week. The cars are built at Staines and Wellman's are the sole agents for Berkshire.

The latest models are fitted with a new pattern engine which has no belts but a positive drive including a dynamo and fan while there are hand and foot brakes. All the seats have air cushions.

The prices are: four-seater luxury all weather model, £310; open two-seater, £265; coupe with double dickey, £315. Messrs Wellman's will gladly arrange a trial run for customers.—July 6, 1923.

1948

DATCHET ROAD

Reprinted from the *Windsor & Eton Express*.  
Sent in by Dudley Misselbrook



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Lagondas in Oils

Dear Sir—Please find enclosed three photographs of Lagonda paintings which I have completed during the last few months. On average it takes about 35 hours to complete one car picture. An exception is the 3-litre Lagonda, which needed about 45 hours due to very detailed work.

I have been interested in motor cars from an early age and I have painted a variety of modern and vintage vehicles since I was about 12 years old.

A few years back as a student in Germany I visited regularly the Daimler Benz Museum in Stuttgart-Untertuerkheim and spent hours and hours admiring the huge and very beautiful Mercedes. During this period I became rather attracted by the older type of machine and started to try my painting talent on these cars.

Although I am a mechanical engineer and have not anything to do with the fine arts, I have improved my techniques considerably and have now built up a very fine collection of Vintage and PVT car paintings.

After I had bought my M.45 I naturally wanted to extend my painting collection by a

number of Lagondas. I have started four cars simultaneously but unfortunately spoiled one when spraying the background. But the three completed ones look excellent (even better in colour) and if you would like to print them in one of the following Club Magazines you are welcome to do so.

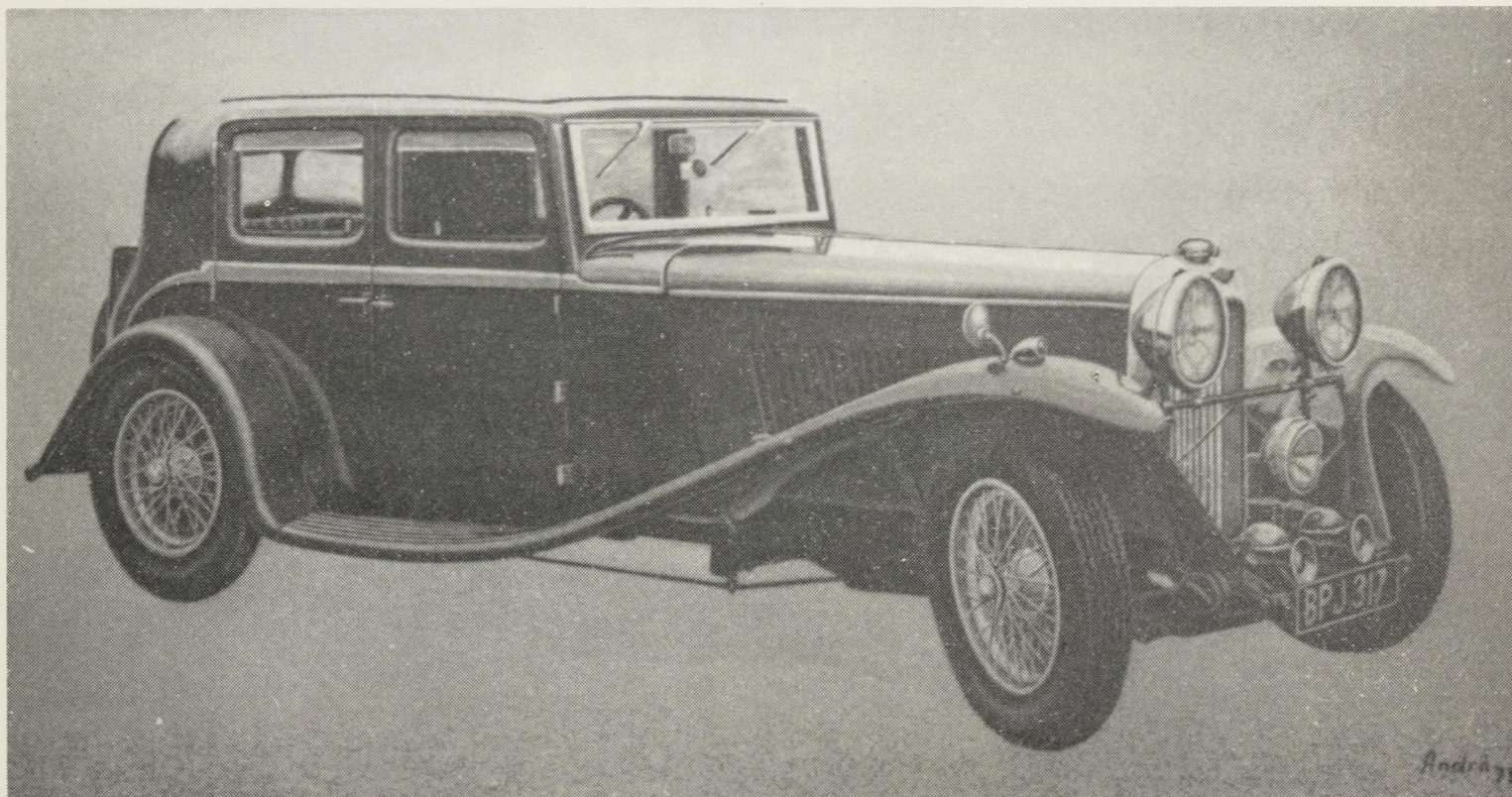
B. W. ANDRAE  
99 Clifton Road,  
Rugby/Warw. CV21 3QH.

### Goings-on in the North

Dear Sir—I understand from previous Club correspondence and magazines I have received that David Hine has shown rude films at various Northern Dinners. Now, according to the current issue of the magazine (Northern Notes) he also makes purchases in Gentlemen's toilets in front of other members (if you will pardon my unfortunate choice of words).

It therefore seems to me that Mr. Hine should be warned to keep his permissive instincts in check, otherwise it may only be a matter of time before someone takes his trousers off at a Club Meeting.

G.P.D. NINETREENINE  
Camshaft Towers,  
Lower Nurdley,  
Cheshire.



B. Andrae's painting of an M.45 Saloon



### **P.S. To Iain Macdonald's 4½-Litre Cooling**

Dear Sir—A mysterious malady affected my 4½ at last year's BDC Silverstone. When I checked the oil after the usual practice laps I seemed to have more than I started with. It was way over the top dipstick mark, but it was an unhealthy mixture of oil and water. Well-meaning persons in the paddock suggested condensation, cylinder head gasket gone (though I knew this was a non-starter on my engine), etc, etc. The President himself together with his assistant, also engineer Iain, gave more valued advice and physical help, and Ken Pape towed me home.

For a long time whenever I switched off the engine it had become an automatic reflex action to lift the bonnet and then give a turn to the water-pump greaser to avoid that embarrassing persistent dripping of water as on so many old Lagondas. Messers. Coates and Hoggard diagnosed the trouble. The pump drive shaft had become worn and the drain-hole in the pump casing blocked with old grease and the products of cavitation. Water was unable to escape from there so it was impelled along the badly fitting shaft and into the sump.

Don did the necessary work and now I am on the road (and track) again with a modern carbon thrust water seal as effective on my two seater as on Iain's delightful LG.45 tourer and his Motor Sport Brooklands Trophy racer.

ROY PATERSON  
Cottingham, Yorkshire.

### **Continental Tour in a 3-litre**

Dear Sir—You may find the enclosed of interest and consider it as possible magazine material. The happening occurred during our summer holiday last year, when we took the Lagonda down to Austria via Cologne and Munich, where we have friends. (I looked up Halwart Schrader, another 3-litre owner, and spent a most enjoyable afternoon with him where he lives on the outskirts of Munich.)

The car ran almost perfectly, punctures being our only major problem, due to worn tubes I found out too late! The engine started missing during the holiday, and this was found to be due to burnt valves, cured on our return. The luggage grid lost a bolt whilst we were driving down through France, which caused havoc. My French is limited and I had trouble asking for a bolt in a

local garage. Having finally struck on the idea of picking one off the floor and waving it about, I had even more trouble trying to explain that the size was relatively unimportant, as long as it went through the hole!

The car was the centre of attraction both parked and on the move, the latter to the danger of many Germans, who would flash past on the Autobahn doing about 75, with all the occupants craning their necks to view the Lagonda from the front, driver included. The Germans were always most helpful about pictures and one even opened his garage on a Sunday to repair the tube, and then only charged the equivalent of 50p, which I thought was most reasonable.

The French affair happened when we stopped to de-water our young son, and emerged from the lean-to to find wife and car surrounded by bereted mechanics. Hubert Bernard, Journaliste, from "L'est Republicain" drove past, U-turned and emerged fully equipped and started flashing his camera. I received the enclosed in mid-January, after he had "retrouve, dans mon bureau l'article et les photos sur votre passage a St. Die!" You will read, as your French is doubtless at least equal to mine, that French journalism is every bit as good as ours!

### **"Pour faire rever les jeunes. . .**

Tout vehicule de fabrication anterieure a 1940 souleve une grande curiosite chez les jeunes et c'est ce qui explique l'attroupement hier a midi, a la station-service Shell, geree avenue de Verdun par M. et Mme Robert Marchal, autour d'un vehicule fabuleux, une Lagonda britannique de 1930. Les jeunes mecaniciens du garage Thouzet en laisserent tomber de saisissement leurs cles (anglaises evidemment) et firent cercle autour du monstre, une "trois litres" que pilotait un jeune Martin Hilton, de Haywards Heath (Sussex).

"Absolument impeccable, la Lagonda fut autopsiee a capot ouvert: une merveille somnolait dedans. Tout autour, des cuivres et chromes rutilants, des courroies de belle qualite, un revetement somptueux et un tableau de bord a faire tourner la tete. Et c'est dans une fumee d'un bleu magnifique que le mirage s'evanouit en direction de Nancy."

Saint Die, vosges.

MARTIN HILTON  
Haywards Heath, Sussex.





F. Gordon. 2-10-32

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