



# **THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 83      Spring 1974**





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## MAGAZINE

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

FRONT COVER: Phil Ridout's high chassis 2-litre shows off its splendid vintage lines.



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## NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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An enjoyable evening was had by all those who came to the Club Dinner held at Syon Park on Saturday, 2nd March. The food was good and everyone enjoyed having DENIS JENKINSON as a guest of honour. "Jenks" made an inimitable speech which touched on many aspects of vintage motoring and judging by the laughter around the bar after the excellent meal he maintained his form through the evening. The Club's Trophies were presented by ROBBIE HEWITT deputising for "Bar" Crocker who was indisposed and could not attend the Dinner. Thanks to MIKE GABER assisted by ROBBIE for organising the evening.

As we have been to Syon Park two years running, your Committee feel that a change of scene might be a good idea for 1975—perhaps even reverting to the formula of a dinner dance. Ideally the venue should be in close proximity to

London, say ten mile radius, have a large private car park, good food but not too expensive, and able to cater for seventy people. If anyone has any bright ideas please get in touch with Mike Gaber or Robbie Hewitt. The Committee are in touch with several possible venues but any contributions to the subject would be welcome.

\* \* \*

Congratulations to ROY PATERSON on being the first winner of the HARRY GOSTLING prize for contributing the best article, "Champion", to the magazine in 1973. While the 'Prize', a collage of 2-litre internals prepared by RICHARD HARE, is re-awarded each year, the winner receives a Parker pen to keep as a memento. So come on all you budding authors, there's an incentive for you!

\* \* \*

Members will be pleased to hear that the late CARL NOLTEN's Lagonda is now in the hands of his nephew DR. JAMES ROBBIE who has joined the Club.

\* \* \*

Below: The Club Awards on display at Syon Park.

*Photo: Tony Wood*







Can it be Biggles and Algy hot in pursuit of the dreaded Von Zoyton? No, it's Peter Hunt and James Crocker in the 1973 Mille Miglia. Photo: Zagari

## Competition Notes

WHEN I WROTE THE NOTES FOR THE LAST MAGAZINE it was pleasant to be able to look back on an extremely successful 1973 Competition season. Plans were already in hand for 1974, details for the fixture list prepared and ready to go to press. You will all have received by now the Club calendar for this year which went out with the January *Newsletter*. Unfortunately as everybody knows, things have since changed drastically so I think it is a good idea for me to outline what has been happening over the last three months to affect Competition activities this year and explain what your committee hope can be organised for 1974.

When in November last, the RAC put a clamp on all rallying activities, etc., they also wrote to each club secretary asking for details of programmes for this year but based on a 20% fuel reduction. They issued a list of suggestions on how the 20% saving could be achieved together with a copy of the *Green Paper* which was inten-

ded to form the basis of discussions with H.M. Government on future rallying and competition activities. Of particular importance to any motoring enthusiast, the use of public roads for competition activities was to be carefully considered.

Very soon afterwards I received details of discussions which had taken place with other clubs interested in our kind of 'Vintage' activity. A number of suggestions have since gone back to the RAC pointing out the requirements of the old car enthusiast with a 'social' image against the modern competitor with his RF1600 Escort and distinctly 'Sporting' approach. Road usage is controlled by permits issued by the RAC and as things are at the moment clubs such as our own must compete with hundreds of other motoring organisations for a share of road space. Looking at the categories of 'Sporting' and 'Social', our day time events are very different from those of the modern enthusiast using the same road at night and at much higher speeds! It seems however, that the RAC do not differentiate and yet we have fewer events but pay at the same rate.

The point of all this is to try and safeguard the



type of rally we enjoy, treasure hunts and social runs, which are now under some threat from the *Green Paper* if the whole competition system is to be revised where public roads are in use.

This whole question has not yet been resolved but the latest information concerning track events and driving tests, etc., like Finmere, can go ahead with a 30% reduction in petrol consumption. As far as I can see, the length of races will be reduced probably by a lap or two and practice time will also be curtailed together with the number of entrants although it is hoped this measure will be unnecessary. On the other hand, should entries by restricted and grids reduced in number such action might encourage higher quality entries, better vehicle preparation and might also result in the return of events for original touring/sportscars which can only be a good thing. Most people agree there are far too many Specials about which are well outside the spirit of the Vintage movement!

We hope to run all events on the 1974 Calendar and the committee is working to this end. The VSCC appear to have a full programme and the BDC will again be running our race at Silverstone. More than ever this year, it will be essential to have a full field of approximately 25 cars, racing enthusiasts please note.

I shall be pleased to hear from members taking part in any event up and down the country and especially how they got on. The first VSCC Silverstone meeting should see a number of Lagondas racing and this event is followed by Curborough and then VSCC Oulton Park, in June. I hope we can look forward to seeing another Lagonda do well in the Concourse.

Finally, I have a number of RAC Competition Licence Application Forms and will be pleased to send them to members as required.

JOHN BATT

**ARTICLES AND PHOTOS OF  
LAGONDA LORE OR  
GENERAL MOTORING  
INTEREST ARE REQUIRED  
URGENTLY FOR THE  
MAGAZINE PLEASE  
THE EDITOR**

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## Lagonda Prelude

(A Love Affair of the Thirties)

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I HAVE BEEN MEANING TO WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT Lagondas for a long time because my first real car—after a succession of Morris Sixes, Standard Ensigns, Triumph Eights and Morgans, etc. (plus a 1923 Talbot 8-18—nearly a real car)—was a 1929 Lagonda 3-litre.

I bought it for £80 in 1935 and immediately composed a two line poem on my way to Aberystwyth from Matlock.

“Down the road to the Irish Sea,

I advanced the ignition to ninety-three.”

Which was a lie because it would not get within ten miles per hour of such exotic rapidity. (This was the first occasion upon which I realized what poetic license could do for you—and I have been using it ever since.)

It was a startling creature in many ways. The naked chassis was painted red, while the rest of it was black. Parked opposite the Midland in Manchester it looked like a member of the fire brigade. Its body was a close coupled (in these days of *Playboy* I hesitate to use such a description) Weymann Saloon with a nickel plated radiator which had the usual Motometer on the cap. At the other end was a sort of trunk thing which finished it off. In between was a simply splendid engine coupled to (heavens how complicated life has become since those simple days when we only did it) a gear box which was pure butter smooth heaven if you knew what you were doing. Inside you blew up the upholstery unless you had nasty little sisters like mine who discovered that nasty little brothers could be rapidly deflated with a pin. In this case you stuffed a cushion under the leather. At the back were a couple of fold-up seats for dwarfs—or if they were not already dwarfs they became so after a short confinement in this restricted grotto.

However, such was the enthusiasm of those days that nobody seemed to mind dashing down to marshall at Donington crowded like a pigmy in the back. Even my young eighteen-year-old brother talking with all the seniority of a premium apprentice at Royces only muttered that they were inclined to arrange things a bit better at that establishment.



The dashboard had nothing remarkable about it except a gas primer which, as a pilot, I knew was something to do with starting a fire. It also had delightful little dash lights that you pulled out of holes and shone on whatever instrument you wanted to see. Otherwise it was the remarkable bonnet stretching and weaving sinuously in front of you as the tonnage gathered speed on the highway that was the beast's most remarkable feature. It really was quite something to drive.

For the first time I was able to change down into third gear at seventy. Hardly any car that I had ever had could even have wound up to that knottage anyway—and there I was making (mostly) immaculate changes at these only just sub-sonic speeds. Girls were simply thrilled to bits (careful—*Playboy* would say it was the vibration). Anyway, for one reason or another I had plenty of cause to go dashing all over England in this incredible chariot. It was a love affair from start to finish. The only quarrel we ever had was when I decided that I wanted to do forty-five in second. In those days rev counters were splendid pieces of extra decoration which meant nothing to people who wanted to do forty-five in second. Something gave and I clumped in with a main bearing gone. In fact, the whatever-it-was forces at work at those revs had snapped off some kind of a key which kept a main bearing in place and allowed it to twist so covering an oil hole. This little unhappiness did not last long, however, and we were soon back at Donington marshalling for people like Seaman, Howe, Bira and Uncle Reg Parnell and all. Not forgetting that incredible little man with that incredible series of Rileys—Freddie Dixon—and Percy McLure.

I remember that one of my jobs was to give out bits of paper with writing on them to drivers as they left the paddock for practice. I handed one to Howe who, from behind a pair of baleful goggles and displaying a pair of large gauntlets on his mitts, asked me politely, if curtly, what I expected him to do with it. I told him (because in those days it was a joke). He drove off even more curtly with the paper flapping to the ground. Then there was the time I sneaked on Dick Seaman for scrounging a lift to the pits on the tail of Bira's ERA. This was NOT ALLOWED and I rang the pits in a fury of indignation because he hadn't got off when I told him to. Anyway, someone must have rounded on him because in the afternoon he called me a spotty faced little sneak which I was—only no spots. I comfort

myself now with the wisdom of hindsight that it was in fact a dangerous practice but then people did that sort of thing in those romantic Birkin-type days and, obviously, I should have entered into the spirit of suicide with which everybody was gaily imbued. My imperfect recollection tells me that this occasion was the JCC 200 mile race of 1936. Anyway, Seaman won in that crafty up-dated 1926, 1500 c.c. Delage Straight Eight which outclassed the ERA of Howe but not the latter's driving which was superb. I have watched that noble Earl race many times and I believe that those few hours were his finest.

Shortly after this came the blow. Separation. I had to go abroad and it simply was not practicable for us to stay together. So, while I had a succession of dark mistresses in lonely parts like Fiats and, incredibly, a Plymouth (only relieved on one occasion by an Anglo Saxon matron called a Daytona Hornet), my real charmer lay languishing in a Derbyshire barn.

I used, on lonely nights abroad, to reflect upon her virtues and her grace. I used to think back on all her odd little ways which I had grown to love. Her speedometer, for instance, which gave an accurate reading in reverse and, while on this backwards kick, her ability to retreat at over forty-five miles per hour. It must have been quite a thing to find yourself being passed by a large Lagonda travelling backwards. A trick we mostly played on Clynos out for the day on Sunday. She also had a horrifying habit of shaking her front axle about like a dog with a rabbit when you braked at high speed. I never knew why, but it was endearing all the same. When provoked she had a splendid ability to jump hump-backed bridges and I only have the faintest recollection of landing crooked one day on a wet surface and thereafter darting hither and yon like some demented clown looking for a stationary piece of road.

Perhaps, however, the most endearingly human thing about her was the way we conspired together to persuade my mother that the oil pressure gauge was the speedometer. Mothers, as everyone knows, can become fearsome objects at speed, but mine, lulled by the fact that I rarely appeared to exceed forty miles per hour, was the paragon of all peaceful passengers. Nevertheless, she did sometimes wonder why I drove faster when the engine was cold. I comforted her with the information that a quick warm up was necessary to avoid damage to the reciprocating parts. She



seemed satisfied . . . though I often wonder. . . .

Then I came home but it was never quite the same again. The dogs of war were thinking of doing their thing and we drove more thoughtfully. Besides that, I had a slight but fortunately only temporary eyesight problem which made me distrust my own judgement.

Then it came and I shot her to death for £5 rather than lock her up for the duration. A quick, sane and seemly end to any Lagonda prelude.

How, years later, I finally revived her spirit, if not her essence, by diving into a number of deeper, more adult, perhaps more satisfying and certainly more lasting affairs with a bevy of DB Rapides is, as they say, another story.

R. D. A. WILLS

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## Disconnected Jottings

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DURING THE 'CLOSE' SEASON CERTAIN RUMOURS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING ABOUT MEMBERS DURING THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE COMING SUMMER. THESE HAVE BEEN COLLECTED TOGETHER AND ARE PUT FORWARD WITHOUT COMMENT.

\* \* \*

It is understood that Nigel Hall will not be using the 'air brake' on his LG.45 Special again, owing to the findings of a Stewards' enquiry.

\* \* \*

Rumour has it that Herb Schofield will not be wearing his own trousers at race meetings this year. I wonder who is wearing them?

\* \* \*

Alan Brown has promised to get into his car this time when partaking in the Finmere Driving tests.

\* \* \*

That well-known roly-poly character 'Jolly James C' has we understand fitted a shoe horn to his Rapier. This is to facilitate exit and entry!

\* \* \*

Roy Paterson has declined an invitation to partake in the 'Hare and Hounds' skittles championship this year. We understand this is because he does not like the way the prize is presented. Is this the thin edge of the wedge?

\* \* \*

John Abson will be 'streaking' around Silverstone again whether Elliot Elder's car is there or not!

Mike Gaber has taken to sleeping in beds instead of 2-litres! Is this the beginning of the end? After his famous appearance at Finmere we understand he has received the commission for designing the new uniforms for the French Riot Police.

\* \* \*

Robbie Hewitt is going continental again and has promised to be our French Co-respondent before the summer is over!

\* \* \*

David Hine the well-known slot-machine king will be firing on all twelve this year. His wife will be pleased!

\* \* \*

Iain Macdonald says he still can—and will! Whatever does that mean?

\* \* \*

John Batt tells me that *in-car-cerrate* is the technical term for putting louvres in the bonnet of the Wood-Batt Special.

\* \* \*

Barker is looking forward to getting his hands on a few bits. Now we know why his re-builds take so long!

THE CAPTAIN

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## MIDLANDS NOTES

by Tony Wood

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FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL MIDLANDS SUMMER, the winter period has been one of contemplation. That is, contemplation of the summer past and the summer to come. This latter is viewed with not a little scepticism in relation to the fuel situation and your scribe cannot help thinking that perhaps all those giant 3, 4½ and 2-litre Lagondas may take second place to the infinitely more fuel-conscious Rapier—but then perhaps there is a slight amount of bias there! Certainly if fuel prices continue to soar to heights of Everest proportions, some hard thinking will have to be done as to which car to run, if any! No doubt some members are already turning to the bicycle as the only sane mode of transport. What a pity that Wilbur Gunn did not start off making bicycles. There may have still been one or two about!

The Midlands Dinner was held on 26th January at the Belfry Hotel, near Coleshill and attracted



a turnout of eighteen. We had the room to ourselves and a private bar, so good use was made of the facilities. Not a few had to be forcibly removed from the environs of the bar at midnight. The prize for the best attendance at the Meriden Pub Meet during the year was won by Don Wittridge who recorded a very commendable 100% record. He received a copy of the collection of motoring cartoons from *Punch*, which kept him quiet for the rest of the evening.

Both area Pub Meets have been well attended during the winter despite the chronic situation the country is in. This may of course be why they *have* been well attended. If members find themselves in the area either on second Tuesdays (The Manor at Meriden) or third Tuesdays (the Gate Inn, Osgathorpe on the B5324 between Ashby and Kegworth) they will be more than welcome.

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*'The name Lake Lagonda sounds great—historical, one of a kind, unmistakable . . .'*

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EDITOR, THE SUN:

This is in response to W. P. Dudley's letter approving the proposed name for the body of water behind the Brown Dam, "Lake Lagonda."

I like the word *Lagonda*, taken from the Indian name of the creek, La Ohonda, which was more beautifully renamed many years ago "The Buck Creek."

At any rate it begins about 12 miles north-east of Springfield and flows through the city. The Lagonda was a very important physical feature in the progress of Springfield. In 1850 we had a population of 7,314 and because of the excellent water supply furnished by the Lagonda, many mills and factories sprang up.

An establishment known as Barnett's Water Power Co. on the Lagonda furnished the needed power for such establishments as the C. Rabbitt's & Co.'s Woolen Mill, Barnett's Flour Mill (1841), Pitt's Grain Separator Co. (1848), Christie & Co. Flooring and Sash, James Barnett's Linseed Oil Mill (1853), the Lagonda Agricultural Works, Steel, Lehman & Co., Flaxseed Mill, and numerous others.

"Barnett's Water Power Co. was remarkable for its uniformity, the stream upon which it is located, the Lagonda or Buck Creek, being fed by

#### 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

frequent and vigorously flowing springs and having its rise 12 miles distant"—an excerpt taken from "Sketches of Springfield in 1856" published in July 1973 by the Clark County Historical Society.

It goes on: "The beautiful Lagonda fringes with liquid silver its northern border. Now smooth as a sheltered lake, now rippling and gurgling thru rocky rapids . . . now dark in the shadows of dark sycamores . . . now making graceful curves and fantastic flexures in the valley of mingled forests and prairie . . . Sweet Lagonda! Indian-like, cool and sedate . . . unimpeded and unexhausted. . ."

Since that source lists the Limestone Street bridge as the important center of industrial activity, I presume it means the bridge at Warder Street. This seems to have been the one source of water power, leased to numerous concerns.

However, "the most extensive manufactory of agricultural implements" was located upon the Lagonda, one and one-half miles north-east of the city proper. The factory was owned by Warder, Brokaw & Childs, and produced a dozen kinds of implements. Perhaps the Harvester truck plant is near this location.

I think the name "Lake Lagonda" sounds great. It is historical, one of a kind, unmistakable and a wonderful description of a beautiful lake to be. Lake Lagonda!

This letter appeared recently in the *Springfield Sun* and which we reproduce with acknowledgments to that journal. It has been sent to us by American member Ed. McClintick.



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## Hull and East Riding Members' Notes

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WE ARE NOT LETTING A TED AND ELEANOR SOCIAL go unrecorded although it was a month or two ago. A good gathering, not only ourselves and the usual merry members from across the Pennines but also a pleasant surprise visit from the Lake District by Bernard and Amy Raine and Milady, their M.45 saloon. Another surprise was an immaculate M.45 tourer not previously seen at a meeting. Strictly speaking it was not present at this social, being in the everyday workshop department of Ted's garage for service. Its owner is not a member, yet. Aston-Martin owners had been invited this time. Several were there, one of whom came top in the competition quiz. The Townsleys again deserve our warmest thanks.

Regarding the Lake District, two of our locals motored over there for the VSCC Lakeland Trial. This was almost a Lagonda social event in itself. The only Lag on the entry list was a new one on us, dated 1929 and entered by T. J. Richardson, but it turned out to be KW 7217, the three litre team-car, and Elliot Elder was in the navigator's seat. Perhaps it was lent out for the occasion? A non-competing Lagonda was parked three cars away from four conversing policemen, and we think the constabulary were wonderful. Not one of them even mentioned that its Road Fund Licence was four months out of date, thereby denying themselves no doubt an immediate erudite valid legal excuse. Our President spent the day Observing. The previous day he had spent motoring up from London at a steady 30 m.p.h. Good for the running-in. Another Lagonda there was the rare model whose photograph is reproduced later, its owner was also having a busy day marshalling. W. H. Golding was there and a familiar Morgan was later seen parked at the most spectacular Drum House climb but we did not see either generation of the record-breaking Macdonalds. They both might have been there among the hundreds of spectators who saw the three-litre 'clean it' with four up. Incidentally there were several hours of sunshine that day as, indeed, in 1972 and we fully intend to be there again next November. We hope to meet even more Lagonda Club members competing, mar-

shalling, or just spectating; it's well worth the effort.

December brought our best-ever local annual dinner, thanks to all the excellent arrangements made by John and Gill Broadbank. The Townsley's came over and so did the Northern Secretary with his chauffeur and Marina. Thanks to another Broadbank invitation Mike Gaber managed his visit two or three weeks later, from London, by road, alone, mounted astride, (wait for it), his borrowed 98 c.c. oriental two-wheeler!

Christmas gone, it is time to be planning holidays. Last year R.P. reported seeing a derelict car near Ulva Ferry; some time later it was reported by someone else in *Motor Sport*. Roy also commented on the lack of Lagondas. If we all have to cut down on holidays and plan what we have left round events in the fixture list perhaps we shall all see more.

Real motoring in 1974 has already begun, with the VSCC Donington Driving Tests. Hermes fielded one Lagonda, one L----a saloon, pillarless yes but not doorless this time, because of the hail, one riding mechanic in the person of J. Lucky Beardow, services not required beyond paying for the meals, and one cousin for company. Ian North in his Aprilia romped to a First Class Award with a clear 19 points lead in his class. In her class and only twelve points behind its winner—just in case no other scribe offers a congratulatory report and W.B. of *Motor Sport* omitted this bit—Robbie Hewitt won a Third Class Award driving her 1934 T.T. Lagonda, while 19 points behind her came Jenks driving the same car and tying with Paterson, also 4½ mounted.

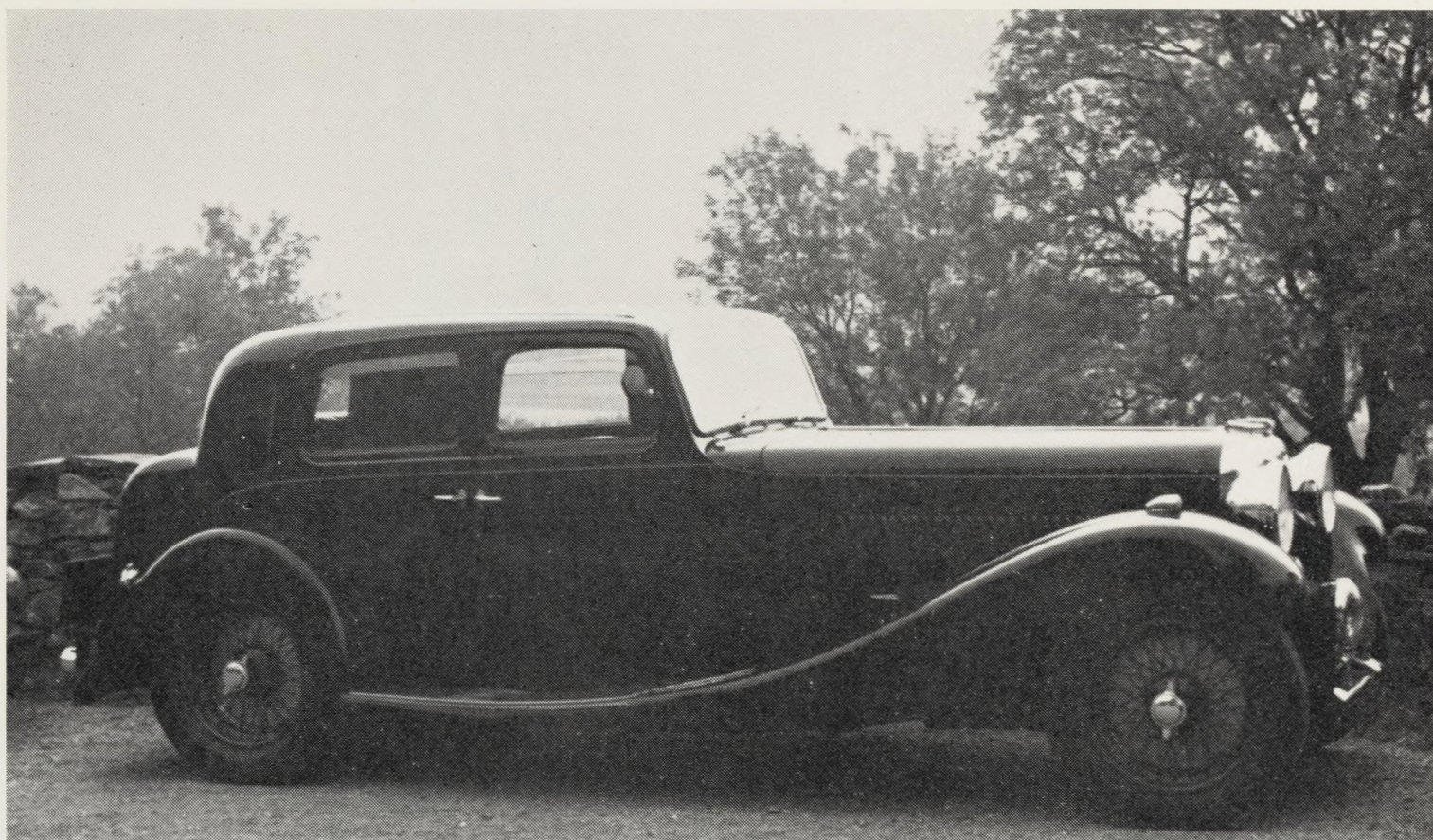
Now how's this for a bit of fame and respect? An Alvis navigator was overheard to say to the unsuccessful man from this region, "That's the Henry Coates special, isn't it? I spoke to him once . . . it must be years ago now."

Henry kept it himself for 4½ years. He parted with it over ten years ago!

An infinitely more famous car competing at Donington was the 1923 Lagonda once driven right across the Sahara and on to Capetown. This time it was driven by R. J. O'Dell but, like the other men driving our marque, he was unplaced. Considering the petrol situation and the atrocious Arctic weather, one test being cancelled because the Clerk of the Course thought the howling gale would prevent the cars rolling unaided down the hairpin hill, this was an enthusiastic beginning to the new season. Where, we wonder, will it end?

"HERMES I"





Hermes Quiz: Can you identify this Lagonda?

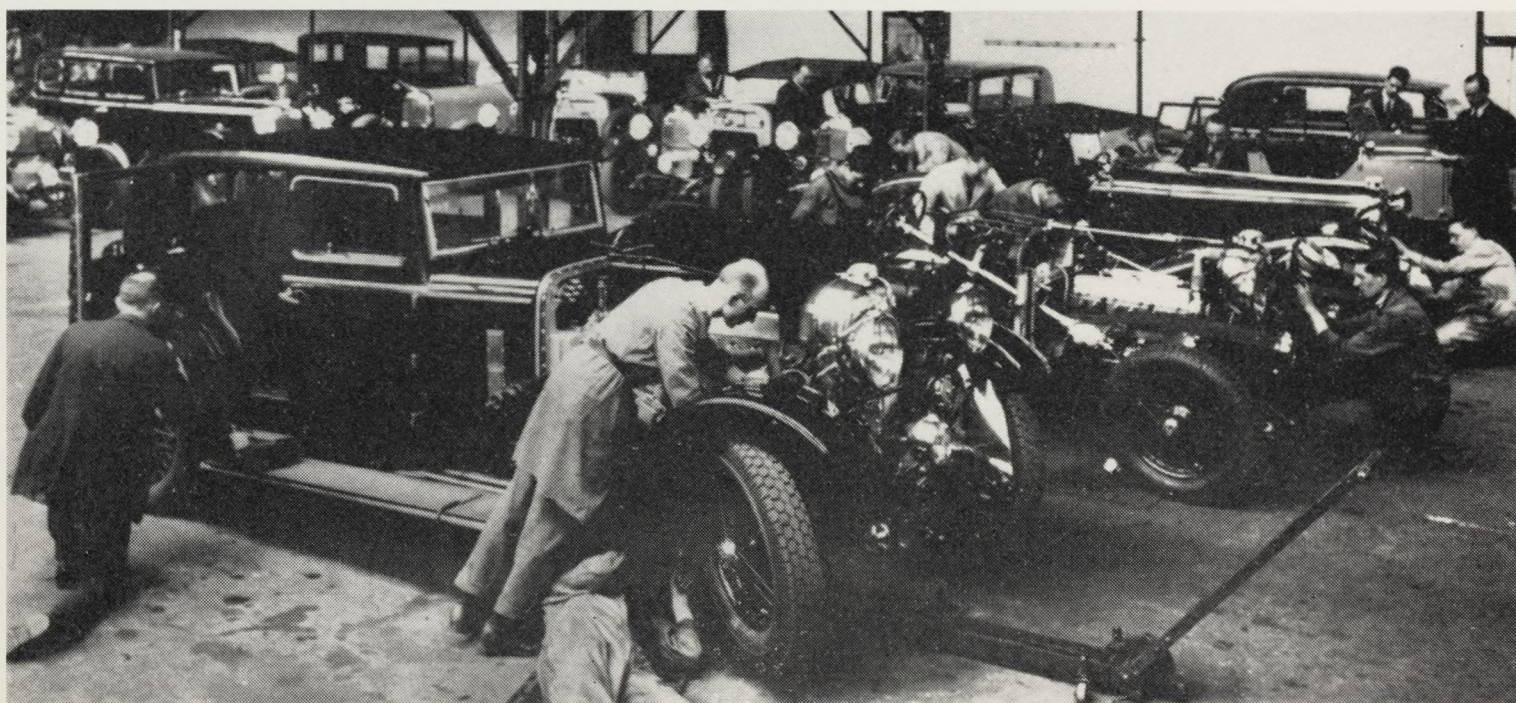
Answer on page 23.

## Lagonda Days—40 years ago

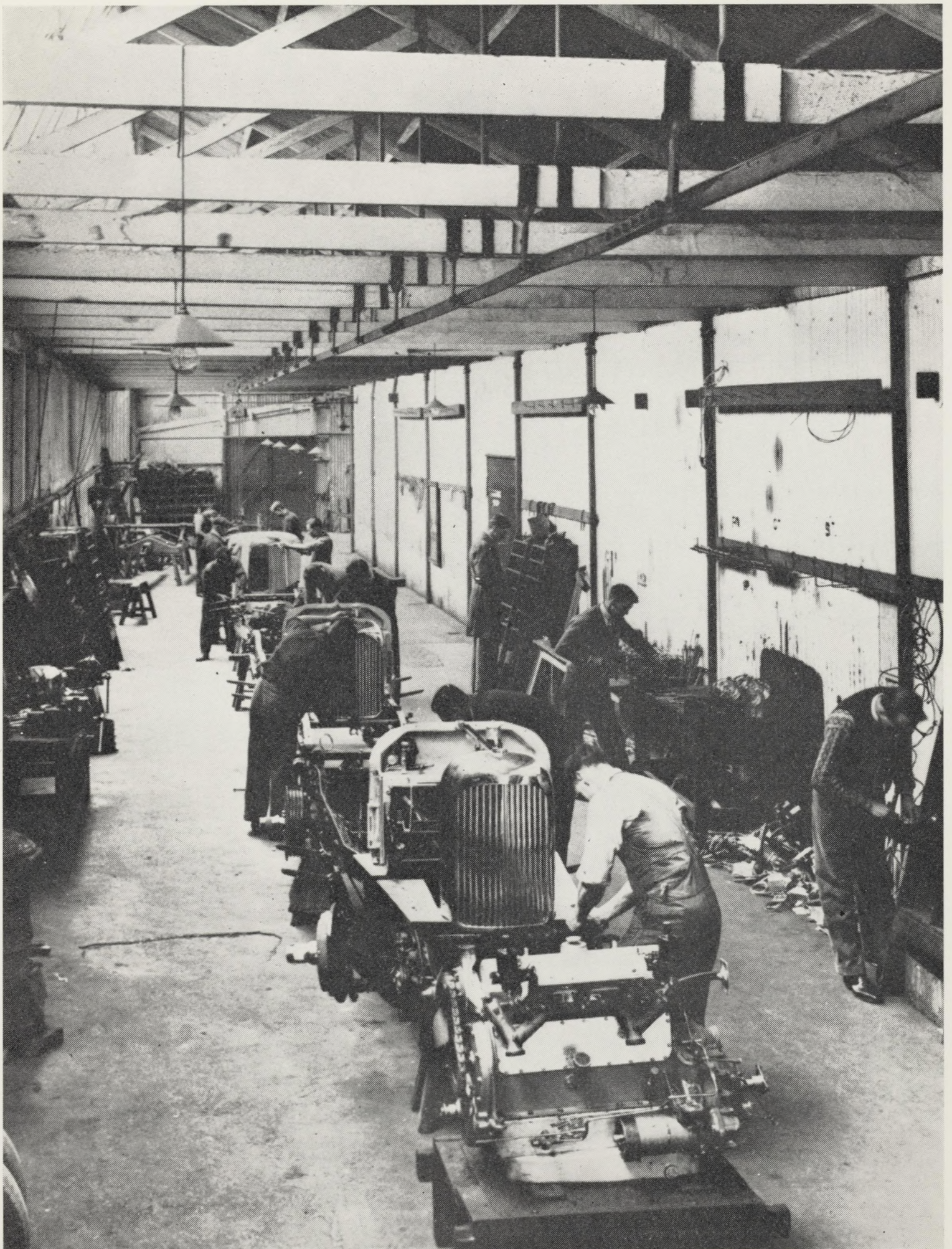
TWO MORE OF THE SCENES AT THE LAGONDA factory sent to us by Arthur Thatcher. Below is the Testing Department where final checks and tuning were carried out under the supervision of

Mr. Hammond, one of the stalwarts of the company. In the far right corner holding a sheaf of papers is Mr. Grey who tested the cars on the road.

Overleaf is the view of the chassis assembly line, the closest Lagonda reached to the Ford assembly system! Certain Northern Members might pick up a few tips from examination of these photographs taken in the early thirties.







Lagonda Days—see previous page



Reprinted from the *Motorcar* of 10th September, 1973 by kind permission of the Editor

# MOTOR TEST LAGONDA V.12 GRAN TURISMO CONVERTIBLE

## A car for all time

The grand tourer par excellence, unmarred by bolt-on goodies. Engine lacks low speed torque but car comes alive between 60 and 100 m.p.h., when it is deceptively fast with a ride both majestic and unfussed. Heavy and sluggish in traffic and very thirsty because of its great weight. Superior road-holding, great comfort. Eccentric choice of extras, e.g. automatic chassis lubrication but no heater. Superbly finished, very expensive indeed.

WHEN IT IS CONSIDERED THAT PRODUCTION COMMENCED in 1938 it will be seen that we have had to wait some time for an opportunity to test the V.12 Lagonda. Such has been the demand for these hand-made limited production cars that it was only recently that the manufacturers were able to lend us one, fortunately a convertible, for an extended test. Like Rolls-Royce before them Lagonda have ignored the quirks of fashion and have continued to produce what they believe to be the best possible motor car. Apart from detailed improvements to the engine to take advantage of advances in metallurgy and available fuels and lubricants, the design of the car is virtually unchanged from what came off W. O. Bentley's drawing board 36 years ago. It was fascinating for us to see just how well in most respects it compared with more modern designs. In some of course it was deficient, in others much superior.

Although the design is so old it still has its novel features. V.12 engines are still not so common and it is interesting to compare the Lagonda with the Jaguar V.12. The general

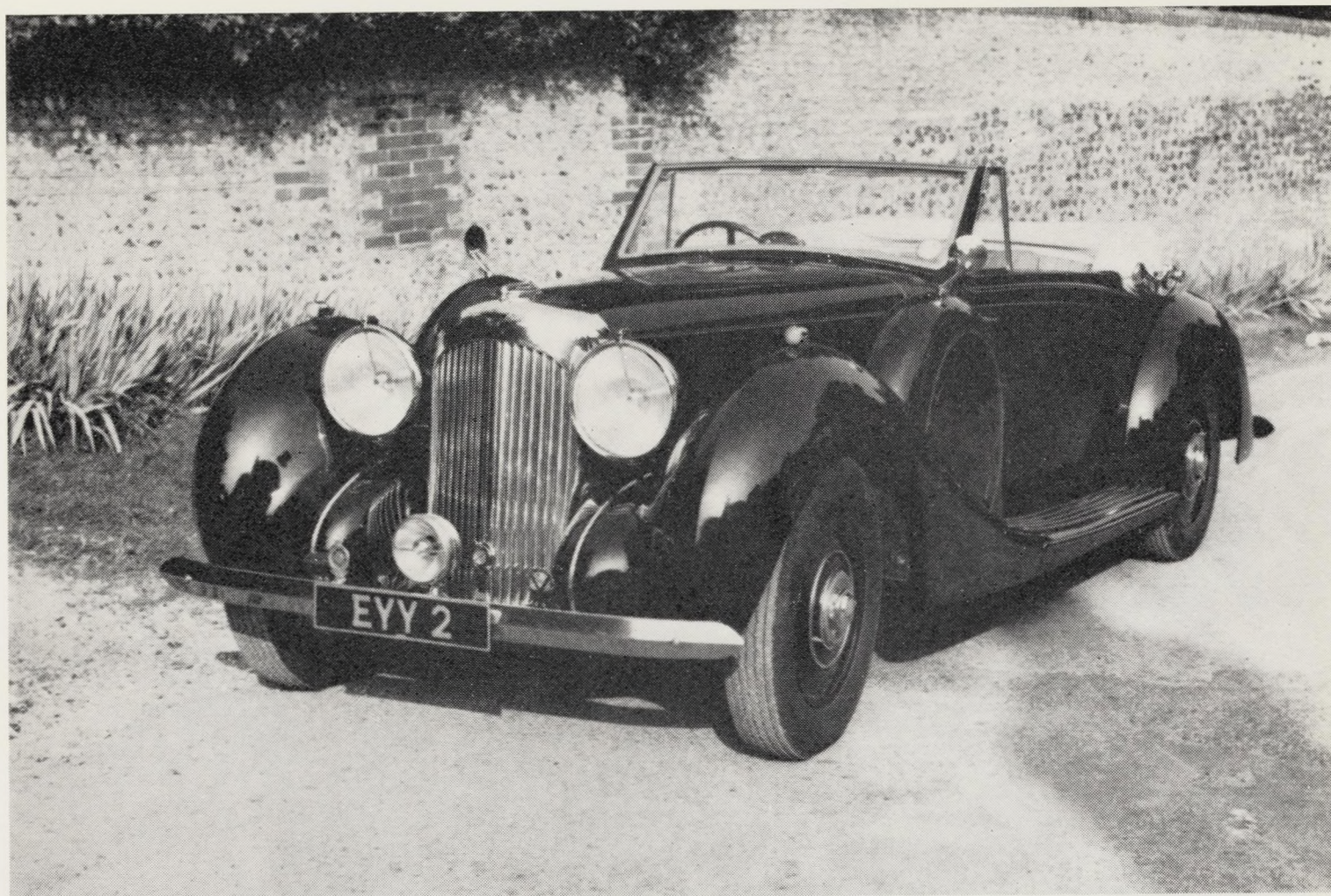
design is remarkably similar with single overhead camshafts to each bank, but whereas the Jaguar engine feeds its pots through convoluted pipes leading from carburettors mounted outboard of the engine, the Lagonda has its horizontal S.U. carburettors within the Vee, giving a more direct feed. Of course the Jaguar engine with its much higher compression ratio than the Lagonda's seven and its higher overall capacity gives out more power, but 180 b.h.p. given out by the 4,480 c.c. of the Lagonda's engine compares favourably with other engines of similar size when one bears in mind that they are more highly stressed and therefore shorter lived.

The Lagonda is unusual in having a separate chassis. But this gives great rigidity to the car and enables it to carry an aluminium body with the incalculable advantage, from the point of view of durability, of freedom from rust. The deep box section frame has cruciform bracing and to ensure that this is sufficiently far forward a separate gear box is employed. Mounted on the cross-bracing itself are the most unusual items of the chassis, namely the 5-foot long torsion bars which provide the springing for the independent wishbone mounted front suspension.

## FIXTURE LIST 1974

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





The classic lines of the V.12

The whole construction of the car is most massive with a very large amount of metal being used. W. O. Bentley clearly did not mind the accusation from Alsace that he designed "les camions les plus vites" and stuck to his principles with this car. Where weight and durability or lightness and a shorter life were the choice, he chose weight and the unladen kerb weight of the test car was 37 cwt. 2 quarters. This car is in this respect a contrast to every other car now made and particularly to the popular cars now constructed of paper thin metal with the rust already forming when they leave the showroom. The buyer of a Lagonda buys it to use for many years, knowing that if he looks after it it will be good as new when its contemporaries of other makes will be little heaps of orange dust.

The coachwork of this car was beautifully made in the Lagonda works to the design of Lagonda's chief body designer Mr. Feely. It has a timeless beauty belonging to no particular age or fashion and achieved by the use of sweeping curves which elegantly harmonise from every viewpoint. The

use of two spare wheel covers, one on each front wing, of which one houses the spare wheel and the other, a dummy, houses the tools and automatic jacking system, is an aesthetically successful solution to the problem of where to house the spare wheel with this type of body without loss of symmetry.

#### On the road

One's first impression on meeting the car, particularly if one has just stepped out of a Mini or some such, is of its great size, coupled with some concern about the difficulty of driving it. This anxiety is not reduced by having consciously to step up into the driving seat. But once there it is so obvious this is a car designed for the driver that the anxiety disappears. The driving seat is most comfortable, all controls are to hand (except the lights and wipers) and although the windscreen is uncurved and very narrow, the view of the road and of both front mudguards is excellent. This is more than can be said of the rearward view which with the hood up is ap-



pallingly bad. Mirrors on the sparewheel covers help but are an extra. We think it is time Lagonda abandoned their feelings on the aesthetics of the rear of the car in the interest of safety and fitted a large rear window. All that can be said for the present slit is that it is well situated with the interior mirror to give a view of cars immediately behind.

The steering wheel is very large and when driving off the leverage provided by it is appreciated, as without the power steering extra not fitted to the test car the steering is very heavy. Once the car is moving at a reasonable speed it becomes lighter although to hold the car round a bend at high speed requires considerable strength. That said the steering has great directness and no interposed sponge so that the reasonably high gearing enables the car to be placed with great precision.

Apart from the heavy steering one senses a certain sluggishness on moving off and the Lagonda is hard work to drive in heavy traffic. It is when the car gets on to the open road that it comes into its own. With the roof down on a fine summer's day to drive this car on the open road at between 60 and 90 m.p.h. is a pleasure indeed. The 12 cylinders give the engine a turbine-like smoothness, the long wheel base, the high seating and splendid suspension give a ride the comfort of which is almost unique today. The car has no natural cruising gate—indeed it will go for miles at 100 m.p.h. without complaint—but will settle down at any speed of the driver's choosing. Most of our testers found 80 m.p.h. the best speed. If checked by other traffic second gear will take the car to 60 m.p.h. and third once more to 80 m.p.h.

The car runs very quietly and is deceptively fast so that it is quite common to be surprised at the high averages achieved; one of our testers drove the 230 miles across country route from the South Coast to Silverstone and back on August Bank Holiday Saturday at an average of 46 m.p.h. without having consciously raced the car. It is however necessary to use the gearbox to keep the car moving fast. Below 3,000 r.p.m. the torque is poor, but if upward changes are timed to keep the revs at this level in the next gear the impetus can be kept up.

The clutch is sweet in action and the manual gear box on the test car, with synchromesh on 2nd, 3rd and 4th gears was positive and chunky if

a little heavy. The gears are pleasantly high and close. The synchromesh is unbeatable and on the test car one could change down to second from top at 50 m.p.h. without revving the engine and there would be no complaining noises from the box.

The roadholding is excellent considering the car's weight. We found that the adjustable rear shock absorbers were best kept at "hard" as an unpleasant pitching as in an American car developed at any speed above 20 m.p.h. with the setting at "soft". With this hard setting there is very little roll on corners and when the breakaway comes, it comes at the rear and is very controllable. Because of the high unsprung weight there is a tendency when taking corners fast for the rear end to hop sideways which has to be watched, but the usual sweeping main road bends can be taken at 80 m.p.h. with confidence. Unlike many cars which become unstable and feel unsafe at speeds above 80 m.p.h. or 90 m.p.h. the V.12 Lagonda seems to become if anything more stable and even at 110 m.p.h., to which we wound it up to during the test, it feels rock-steady on the road.

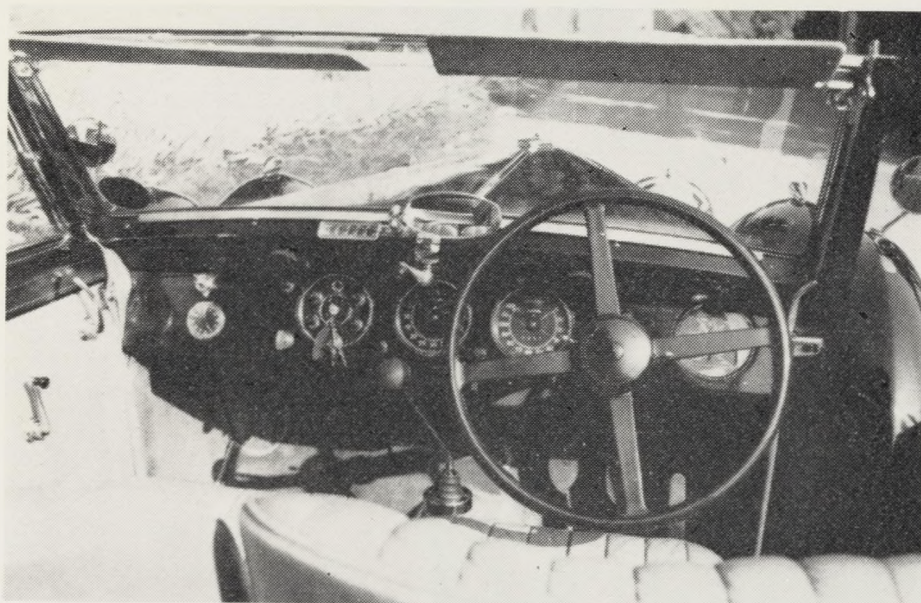
We approached the brakes with some trepidation. Drums all round and no servo for the hydraulic system to stop two tons of car seemed unpromising. To our astonishment we found them very light in use and every bit as efficient as very sophisticated systems. The secret we believe is in the great braking area provided by drums as large as the big wheels themselves, the fine tolerances used in their manufacture, and a certain amount of self-wrapping effect built into the design. Cooling vents and fins are provided and this keeps fade to a minimum even after repeated use.

The handbrake is a sturdy lever to the right of the driver's seat on the floor. It operates on the back wheels and is really effective, giving the best figure, of 38 feet stopping distance from 30 m.p.h. that we have ever recorded.

The old fashioned semaphore arm direction indicators are fitted and these are partly concealed from the rear by the rear wing cowl. Flashing indicators would be an improvement.

For night driving the car is fitted with P 100 headlamps and a spot light to augment them only operative in conjunction with them. We had forgotten just how good these headlamps are. They prove that there is nothing to beat high wattage and a large reflector area and the light provided

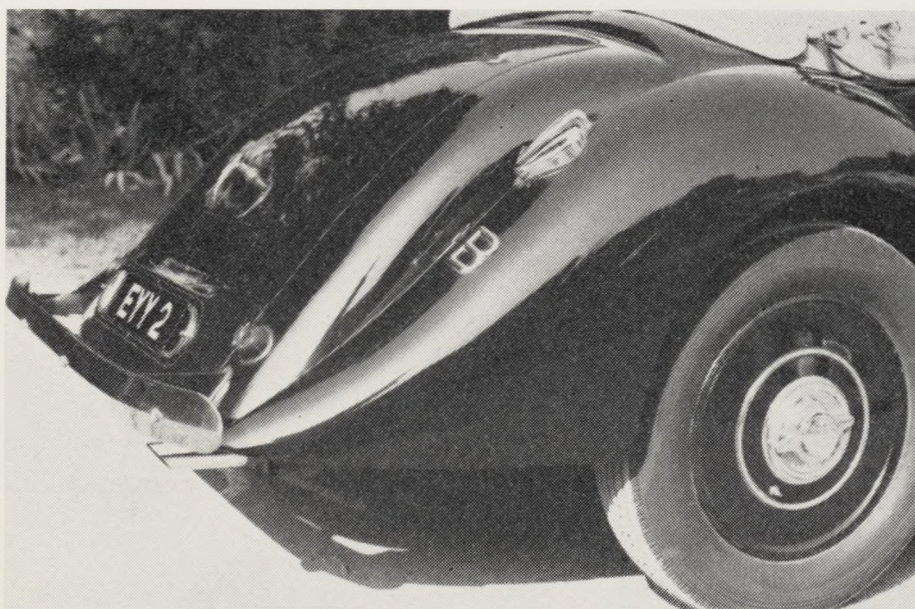




The instruments are large and clearly calibrated. The driver can see both front wings.



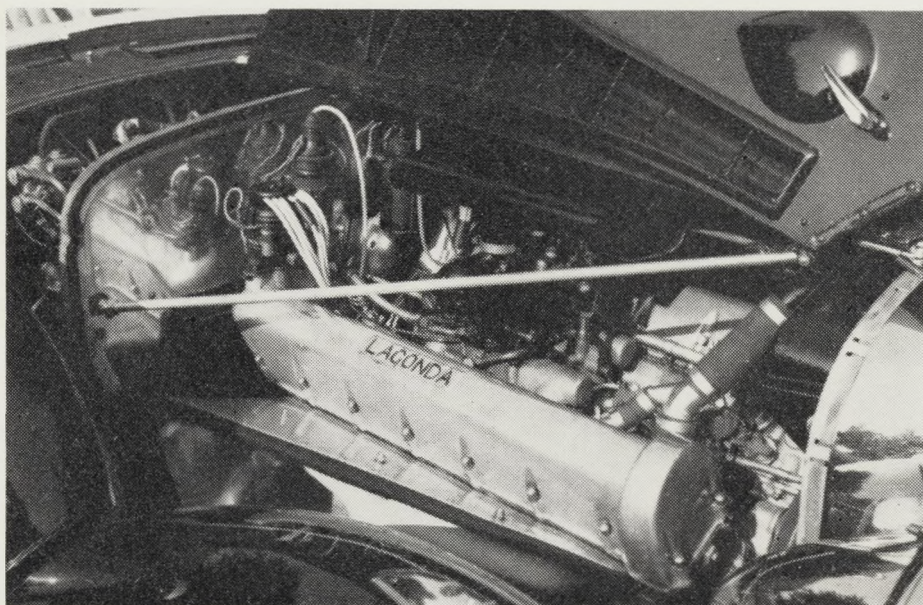
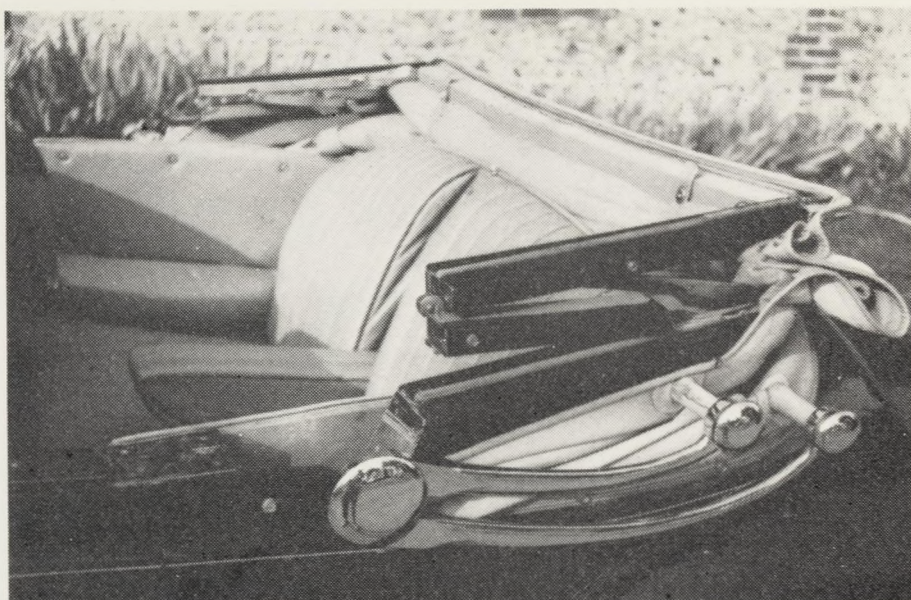
The seats are soft and very comfortable, but give good support.



The beautifully swept lines of the tail and rear wings.

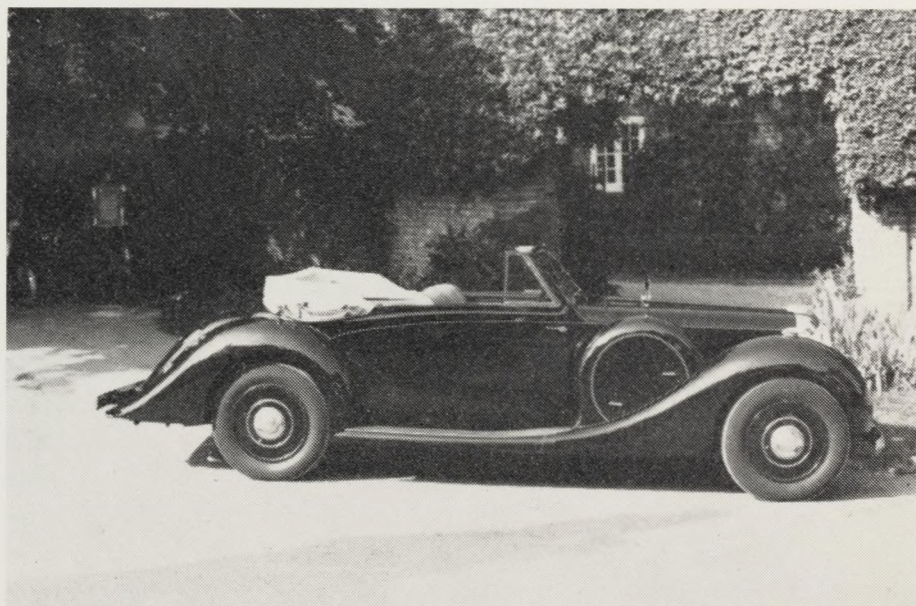


The hood mechanism is beautifully engineered.

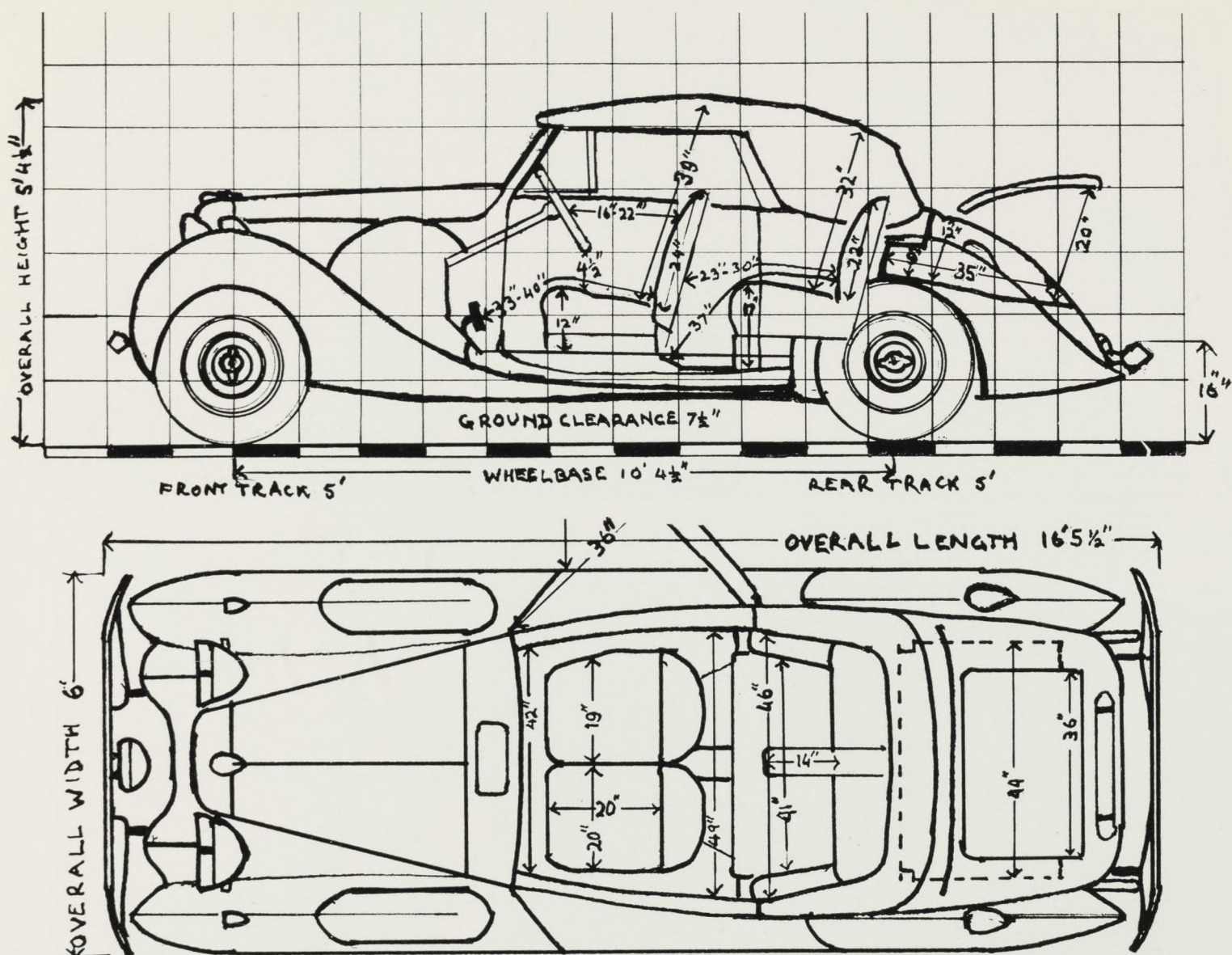


The engine compartment is very crowded and not very accessible.

From the side, the lines of the V.12 are long and lean. The paintwork and carriage lining are to a very high standard.







by them was superior to anything we have found on any modern car. In one respect it is unfortunate that they are mounted so high as we found that their intensity even when dipped caused frequent annoyance to the drivers of more earth-bound vehicles in front, but given an open road with the lamps up one could see far ahead and drive in confidence at the car's full speed.

Four separate actions are required to get the windscreen washer operating, a very poor piece of design. However the windscreen is so high and so far back that it rarely gets dirt on it from vehicles in front even on motorways and the frantic and frequent cleaning needed on smaller cars on wet days is quite unnecessary on this car.

The test car started at first press of the starter button from cold every time for us once we learnt the drill. This is to switch on the concealed battery master switch, the ignition and the manual electric choke, then wait for the S.U.

electric petrol pumps to cease ticking and only after this press the starter. The choke could be switched off after half a minute after starting.

Petrol consumption worked out at 12.3 miles per gallon average for our tests which of course included much hard driving. An offset is that the car will run happily on 91 octane fuel with of course a great price advantage. Oil pressure remained between 50 and 75 lb. per square inch throughout the test. There was no overheating even on the hottest days.

Because the motor manufacturers have by and large decided to ignore the demand for large open cars and thereby to deprive the public of the very pleasant type of motoring we enjoyed in this car—quite different from a small sports car of just having a sunshine roof open in a saloon—we have had difficulty in finding suitable comparisons. Two of the three cars compared, the Mercedes and the Alvis are now alas no longer produced



but as good used models are still obtainable we felt these would be the most suitable to include.

### Fittings and Furniture

The seats are executed in highest quality pleated hide as are all the door panels and other trim—no synthetics or rexine on this car except in the interior trim for the boot. The carpeting is thick pile Wilton and the dash and door trim are in ebony finish wood with brass inlay. The hood is fully lined and the hood joints and mechanism are beautifully designed and engineered so that there are none of the customary rattles with the hood up. Raising and lowering the hood is a simple operation—essential in an open car or either one never opens it, or if hardy enough never closes it. To lower the hood there are three hood press studs and one catch on each side to be released. Then the elegant hood irons are broken and the hood can be pushed straight back. Two short straps with “lift the dot” catches secure it and the job is done, unless one wishes to fit the cover which entails a few more press studs.

The car is a luxurious four seater, but if necessary three can be carried in the back, though the transmission hump rises high above the rear foot wells despite a hypoid live rear axle. The seats are deep, the back seat has a folding central armrest and fixed side armrests and the front seats have provision for full fore and aft movement and a certain amount of adjustment to the angle of the backrest. The current trend to provide so called fully reclining front seats has been ignored as a useless gimmick.

The rake of the steering wheel can be adjusted but this is not lightly to be undertaken as it may mean adjusting the steering drop arm to keep the steering wheel spokes upright and horizontal when the wheels are straight.

Ashtrays are provided in the dashboard and in each of the rear side armrests and there is a cigar lighter on the dashboard. There are two sun visors, the passenger's having a vanity mirror on its upper side. An interior light is fitted above the rear window (which has a flap which can be fastened over it at night). This light is controlled from the dashboard, as is a map reading light above the passenger's seat. There is a small lockable glove compartment on the left of the dash, but this is the only storage space within the car except for the space behind the rear seats when the hood is up.

Instrumentation is comprehensive and com-

prises clock, rev counter, speedometer with mileage and trip recorder, petrol warning light, thermometer, ammeter, oil pressure gauge and petrol gauge, the last four being elegantly housed in the four quadrants of a dial of the same size as the speedo and rev counter. The instruments are clear and with precise calibrations instead of the hazy approximations normally encountered nowadays. The rev counter and speedometer are conveniently placed for the driver, but the main lights, spot light, dash lights and wiper switches are inconveniently far to the left and difficult for the driver to find without taking his eyes off the road. The dash lights are not adjustable but have just the right brilliance. The petrol warning light is annoyingly bright, particularly as it tends to flash on when there are as many as five gallons left.

A pushpull switch on the dash enables the two tone horns set in the bulges forward of the radiator (and fully chromed although invisible except from underneath, a nice conceit) to sound either loud or soft. This is a considerate and unusual refinement and brings one to the somewhat eccentric choice of “extras” on this car compared with the usual run. No heater is normally supplied (though quite a bit of heat comes back from the engine). There is no demister/defroster but the windscreen opens to the horizontal for emergencies and there is an adjustable air inlet on the bonnet top. There is no main beam tell-tale light (one is never in any doubts about this), no courtesy light and no brake warning light (the brakes are not expected to fail) and there are no superfluous decorative strips of chromium, fancy flashes, mock wood plastic trims, imitation air intakes and so forth. Instead there are a great many features not found on other modern cars. These include—an automatic chassis lubrication system by which every time the brake pedal is depressed oil is carried through yards of small bore copper pipes to all the joints requiring lubrication, except the wheel hubs, the transmission and the steering box; twin quick action filler caps for the petrol tank; a starting handle; an automatic jacking system whereby front or back or all four wheels can be lifted by a hand pump under the near side, mock spare wheel cover; a hand throttle; thermostatically controlled radiator shutters; the most comprehensive tool kit we have seen; and a concealed luggage rack.

This brings us to the subject of the provision



for luggage. With the luggage rack not in use this is frankly inadequate. There is room for one large suitcase and two medium sized grips in the boot, plus the usual coats and odds and ends. This is not enough for four people unless they are travelling very light. With the rack extended however the capacity is enormous, though except for luggage under the cover of the boot lid there is the danger of it getting wet.

### Living with the Lagonda

It is unlikely that those who pay the £12,500 needed to buy this car will do their own servicing but should they wish to do so the toolkit provided will give them all the tools they will require. The engine looks accessible but is not. It is exceedingly tiring to work on for any length of time because of the need to bend over the front wings and the plugs are difficult to remove even with the special tool provided and asbestos fingers. The starter dynamo and steering box can only be readily reached from underneath the car, but fortunately they do not require much attention. Radiator and battery fillers are readily accessible.

The engine sump holds 3 gallons so that an oil change is a costly matter and the water capacity, which is 4 gallons, makes a fill of antifreeze and distilled water (recommended by the factory) expensive. 6.50 x 18" tyres are also dear to buy and covers last only about 10,000 miles.

### Conclusion

This is a car for the connoisseur, with some eccentric quirks in its design. Whoever buys it must be prepared to forgive its cost, its petrol consumption and its low speed and traffic performance. He will concentrate instead on its marvellous swinging gait on the open road, the beauty of its lines, the quality of its fittings and the meticulous accuracy of its engineering throughout, with the substantial always being preferred to the flimsy. This is a genuine grand tourer in the vintage champagne class, to take four people in great comfort over long mileages, riding high above lesser mortals in tin fuzz boxes, with no more fatigue than aching biceps for the driver. It is a car as at home in the drive of an English country house, the Promenade des Anglais in Nice or bowling down the great roads of Europe with the speedometer needle sitting between 80 and 90 m.p.h. for mile after mile.

### MANUFACTURER

Lagonda Motors Ltd.  
Staines, Middlesex.

### PRICES

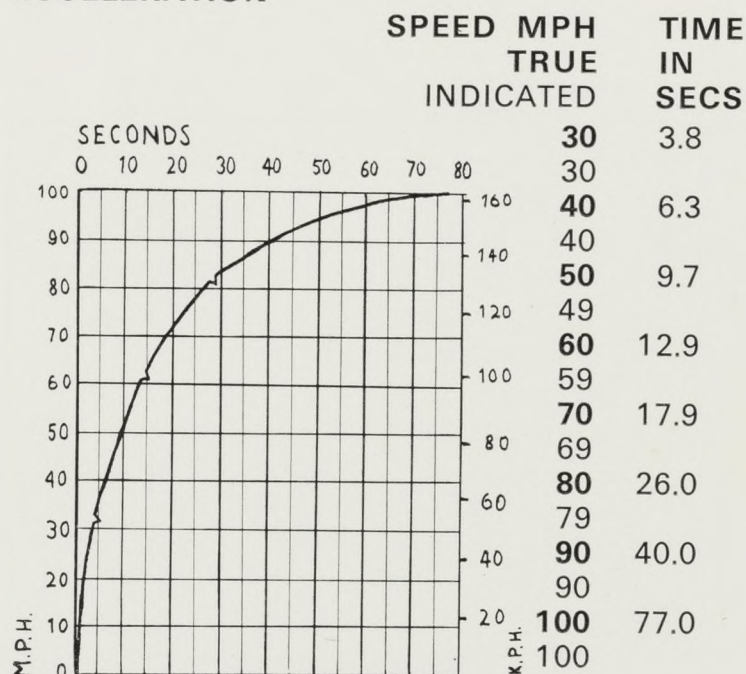
Total (in G.B.) including special car tax and VAT.. .. £12,500

### EXTRAS (inc. VAT)

Radio	..	..	..	£40
Heater	..	..	..	£90
Power steering	..	..	..	£175
Automatic transmission	..	..	..	£275
Fitted luggage	..	..	..	£95
Initials to doors	..	..	..	£5

*Author's note:* All important figures included are taken from or calculated or extrapolated from published road tests or from measurements made with my own car. Imagination has only been used where it did not seem to matter!

### ACCELERATION



### GEAR RATIOS AND TIME IN SEC

mph	Top	3rd	2nd	Standing $\frac{1}{4}$ mile
	(4.27)	(5.34)	(7.13)	18.7 secs 73 mph
10-30	8.9	6.9	4.0	Test distance
20-40	8.7	6.9	4.5	1533 miles
30-50	8.4	7.2	5.0	Mileage recorder
40-60	8.6	8.0	—	Accurate
50-70	10.9	8.5	—	

### PERFORMANCE MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Gear	mph	kph	rpm
Top (mean)	100	166	5,000
(best)	103	171	5,100
3rd	86	143	5,400
2nd	63	105	5,250
1st	32	50	5,250



## BRAKES

Response (from 30 mph in neutral)

Load	Distance
20 lb	120 ft
57 lb	60 ft
135 lb	30 ft
Handbrake	38 ft
Gradient	holds on 1 in 3

## COMPARISONS

### MAXIMUM SPEED MPH

Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow Convertible (£14,399)	119
Mercedes-Benz 280 SE Convertible (£7,250*)	116
Alvis TD21 Convertible (£5,250*)	106
<b>Lagonda V.12 Convertible (£12,500)</b>	<b>103</b>

\*Estimated present day equivalent

### 0-60 mph—sec

Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow	10.2
Mercedes-Benz 280 SE	11.2
<b>Lagonda V.12</b>	<b>12.9</b>
Alvis TD21	13.9

### Standing $\frac{1}{4}$ mile—sec

Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow	17.5
Mercedes-Benz 280 SE	17.8
<b>Lagonda V.12</b>	<b>18.7</b>
Alvis TD21	19.6

### Overall mpg

Alvis TD21	18.3
Mercedes-Benz 280 SE	17.5
Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow	12.4
<b>Lagonda V.12</b>	<b>12.3</b>

## GEARING

(with 6.50" x 18" tyres)

Top	20 mph per 1,000 rpm
3rd	15.9 mph per 1,000 rpm
2nd	12 mph per 1,000 rpm
1st	6.1 mph per 1,000 rpm

## CONSUMPTION

### FUEL

Typical mpg	13 (21.4 litres/100 km)
Overall mpg	12.3 (23.0 litres/100 km)
Grade of fuel	1 star (91 octane)

## OIL

Consumption (SAE 20W/50) 200 miles per pint

## TEST CONDITIONS

Weather: Fine Wind: Light

Temperature: 19 deg. C (67 deg. F)

Barometer: 30.55 in. hg. Humidity: 42 per cent

Surfaces: Dry asphalt

## WEIGHT

Kerb weight: 40 cwt. (4,480 lb)

(with oil, water and half full fuel tank)

Laden as tested: 43.1 cwt. (4,872 lb)

## TURNING CIRCLE

Between kerbs L and R 37 ft. 9 in.

Steering wheel turns, lock to lock  $3\frac{2}{3}$

## SPECIFICATION

### ENGINE

Cylinders	12, in 60 deg. vee
Main bearings	4
Cooling system	Water: pump, thermostatically controlled radiator shutters, fan.
Bore	75 mm (2.953")
Stroke	84.5 mm (3.327")
Displacement	4,480 cc (273.4 cu. in.)
Valve gear	Single overhead cams and tappets
Compression ratio	7 to 1 Min. octane rating: 90
Carburettors	Two S.U. down draught
Fuel pumps	Two S.U. electric
Oil filters	Two washable gauze filters
Max. power	180 bhp at 5,500 rpm
Pull	Tapley Q figure 265

### TRANSMISSION

Gearbox	Four speed manual
Gear ratios	
Top	1.0
3rd	1.24
2nd	1.67
1st	3.27
Reverse	3.0
Final drive	Hypoid bevel 4.27 to 1

## CHASSIS AND BODY

Construction	Separate, steel chassis, all aluminium body on ash frame
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## SUSPENSION

Front	Independent; torsion bars, double wishbones, telescopic dampers.
Rear	Live axle, semi elliptic springs, adjustable Armstrong double piston shock absorbers, anti roll bar.

## STEERING

Type	Cam and roller
Wheel diameter	18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

## BRAKES

Make and type	Lockheed hydraulic, drums front and rear; two independent hydraulic circuits.
Drum dimensions	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. dia.; 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide Lining area 182 sq. in. (84 sq. in. per ton laden)



## WHEELS

Type	Dunlop straight sided wire wheels with knock-on locking caps
Tyres—make	Dunlop
type	Crossply, tubed
size	6.50" × 18"

## EQUIPMENT

Battery	12 volts, Positive earth
Generator	Lucas C45 HV CC11 Dynamo
Headlamps	Lucas P100 2 × 60 watts, solenoid dippers
Passlight	50 watt
Total wattage	Headlamps and passlight 170 watts
Reversing lamp	Standard
Electric fuses	13
Screen wipers	Single speed
Screen washer	Standard
Interior heater	Extra
Safety belts	Extra
Interior trim	High quality hide, cloth linings
Floor covering	Wilton pure wool carpet
Jack	Built in, pump operated
Windscreen	Laminated
Underbody protection	Primer, paint, stone guards

## MAINTENANCE

Fuel tank	20 Imp. gallons (91 litres); 2 gallon warning light
Cooling system	32 pints
Engine sump	24 pints (13.5 litres) SAE 20W/50 Change oil every 2,500 miles Clean filters every 5,000 miles
Gearbox	4½ pints SAE 20W/50. Change oil every 10,000 miles
Final drive	3 pints Hypoy. Change oil every 5,000 miles
Grease	3 points every 5,000 miles, 4 points every 10,000 miles
Tyre pressures	32 psi front and rear normal Increase by 4 psi for full load or maximum speed

## PERFORMANCE DATA

Top gear mph per 1,000 rpm	20
Mean piston speed at mean max. speed	2,772 ft/min
Bhp per ton laden	83.7

M. R. VALENTINE

*Editor's Note:* The style of this fascinating road test report is based on the current reportage in the leading motoring weekly press. Acknowledgement is therefore duly made to the *Autocar* and *Motor*.

# Springfield Has Many Historical Landmarks

By JIM HAYS

This article was sent to us by Ed. McClintick. Acknowledgment is made to the "Springfield Sun" where, we believe, it first appeared.

Among the several historical landmarks in Springfield which may be observed as one drives briskly through the center of town along the Ohio 72 bypass is a once proud building, now humbled by accumulated dust and memories of a glorious day.

At the northwest corner of High and Spring sts. stands the Lagonda Club building, completed in 1895 as a bastion of the "clubdom" popular even then.

The Lagonda Club was conceived in 1892 by a number of "prominent young men who felt that Springfield must have a genuinely metropolitan club, and clubhouse, or simply not be 'in it,'" according to an account in the Springfield Republic-Times of 1895 the day after the club opened officially.

Articles of incorporation from the State of Ohio were granted the club in February, 1892, with incorporators listed as H. C. Dimond, B. H. Winters, W. S. Thomas, W. F. Foos, W. S. Wilson, and W. C. Leffel.

The Lagonda Club's first board of directors listed W. S. Thomas, president, W. S. Wilson, first vice president, C. R. Crain, second vice president, W. C. Leffel, C. A. Bauer, F. O. Bowman, J. B. Cartmell, W. F. Foos, B. H. Winters, and W. S. Rabbitts.

The Republic-Times article of Nov. 8, 1895, revealed that one of the prerequisites for membership in the Lagonda Club was that one be a "gentleman of lawful age," whose application for membership carried the recommendation of two members. "Favorable action" by the board of directors was also mandatory, and two negative votes barred membership. It was not noted how many anguished moments were spent by those whose names provoked "two negative votes."

It was observed, however, that the Nov. 7, 1895 opening of the club was regarded as "brilliant," and "eclipsing in elegance any prior social



assembly in the city's history."

"The opening of the Lagonda Clubhouse last evening was the commanding event not only of the present in Springfield society, but of all the the past," the Republic-Times continued.

Pursuing the significance of the Lagonda Club further, the 1895 newspaper article remarked that "with a keen appreciation of the fact that this opening means the introduction of many progressive and educating influences into local social life, the affair has been regarded universally as in the nature of an important factor in the advancement of Springfield's interests, and this in many other senses than a purely social one."

It was observed that "splendid equipages rolled up to the door" to discharge "richly dressed men and women," whose "bright faces and striking, elegant toilettes" later contributed to a dazzling "illumination" in the ballroom.

About 400 persons, members and select guests, some from "as far away as Pittsburgh and St. Louis," attended the opening. They were gentlepeople all, as attested to by the refinement which prohibited smoking cigars until 10 p.m., "and then only in the billiards room, and in the smoking room behind the musician's balcony." Who gives a hoot for pool players and musicians?

This, of course, was in an era shortly before a publication on Springfield pointed, with some smug pride, to the total number of "persons ten years of age and over engaged in occupations."

Only 20 years later, Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn penned her famous quatrain noting that

"The golf links lie so near the mill,

That almost every day,

The laboring children can look

And watch the men at play."

\* \* \*

The land on which the Lagonda Club was built was owned by a pioneer settler in Clark County, a son of David Lowry. Lowry's son later sold the two lots, for \$67, to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cavileer, in 1824. Cavileer built a large home on the site that overlooked what was then called Lagonda Creek, now termed Buck Creek. Cavileer was said to have been an enterprising businessman, who served as treasurer of Springfield when it was first incorporated in 1827.

The Lagonda Club founders purchased the land from the Cavileer heirs for \$12,000, and in 1894 construction on the \$25,000 building, to be furnished at an expense of \$7,500, began.

Frank Mills Andrews, 1867-1948, is credited with the architectural design of the French Renaissance building. Andrews was a member of the architectural firm of Williams and Andrews, Dayton, O., known as the designers of the Riebold Bldg., the Dayton City Club, and the National Cash Register Bldg. in Dayton. Andrews also designed the state capitol buildings in Kentucky and Montana, as well as numerous other buildings across the U.S. He was, perhaps coincidentally, related to Oscar T. Martin, one of the charter members of the Lagonda Club.

The four-storey clubhouse fronts on Spring st. for a distance of 138 feet, and runs 40 feet along High st.

The first storey of the building is of Bedford stone, while the remainder is of a delicately-shaded brick, almost pink in hue. "The face of the building is of the richest and most pleasing design," according to the Republic-Times of '895.

The facade incorporates "unusually intricate carving, including the letter 'L', for Lagonda, as well as the date 1894, when construction began."

Inside, in the grand reception hall, the several lounging rooms, a library, reception rooms for ladies, dressing rooms, a cafe, dining rooms, buffet, restaurant, offices, cloak rooms, billiards rooms, smoking, storage and whist rooms, even a card room proper, and the 40-by-63 foot ballroom, nothing was spared to avoid a look of patent opulence.

The Republic-Times tells us that during that opening night, when "bright lights shone on fair women and brave men," the scene was like one of "enchantment, and expressions of delight and surprise fell from a thousand lips, so grand, so perfect, so magnificent, was it all."

In the grand reception hall, "the gas and electric fixtures" were in "oxidized silver, adorned by fleur de lis." The reception chair was six-feet, six-inches high, and upholstered in Spanish leather. Two rows of large tack beads of oxidized silver, also engraved with fleur de lis, adorned its borders. The entire reception hall was finished in the Empire styling.

In the main lounging room, which extended across the entire front of the building, a fitting oriental decor was employed.

"The chairs are upholstered in red leather, the table is covered with red leather, even the mantel over the fireplace is covered with red leather," the Republic-Times exclaimed.



"The chandeliers in the lounging room are of heavy brushed brass, designed after a special oriental pattern. In the center of the front room is an oriental retreat, both very rich and very cozy. Every feature of this retreat is thoroughly Moorish, the fret work, the upholstery, the velour, the solid mahogany tabourettes," the old newspaper remarked.

Art-glass windows, frescoes, portieres, exquisite wall-hangings, deep rugs, and antique oak furniture leant an atmosphere of almost tactile voluptuousness to the clubhouse.

In the ladies' reception room, described as "the finest in the building," rich velvet and silken pillows dotted an "elegant, plush window seat."

"And the hangings and upholstery there are in satin and damask, and the woodwork is in white and gold. On the left side of the room is a large pier glass, the finest ever seen in this city," we are told, the pedestals of which support two magnificent French vases.

"The electric fixtures of the apartment are in ormolu, and the floor covering is Axminster carpet, in the center of which a rug effect in delicate coloring and fixtures is woven. This entire room is executed in the French motif," we are told in the newspaper from 77 years ago.

A 10-foot high rubber tree was a major feature in the cafe, decorated in shades of green. In the adjoining buffet, a "specifically constructed, remarkable refrigerator" was situated. This device was "so constructed that many currents of cold air, rendered to any desired degree of temperature, are thrown upon the bottle containing the wine."

"It is guaranteed that a bottle of champagne can be chilled to a frappe in 20 minutes," it was boasted.

The fourth-floor billiards room was described as "a wonder."

"It is simply the finest that could be fitted up, and this is true also of all its appointments. The order to the manufacturer was for the finest that could be produced in tables, cues, balls, etc. The balls, for instance, are said to be so sensitive that a sudden lowering of the temperature would cause them to burst asunder, though they are made of the finest ivory from Zanzibar," the Republic-Times reported.

All the equipment in the billiards room was supplied by the Brunswick, Balke, Collendar Co. The benches and chairs were upholstered in the "finest Spanish leather," it was noted, and the

windows, fittingly enough, were said to have been of "the finest art glass."

Next to the billiards room was the whist room, which in turn adjoined the card room proper. That functional apartment was decorated in olive and green.

A private dining room for ladies nearby was done in pink corduroy plush; the ballroom on the fourth-floor was also done in pink, with 100 lights, "so arranged that they may all be turned on at once, or alternately, or even individually, at the will of the manipulator," it was noted, while the floor itself was described as a "marvel of elegance."

All that elegance disappeared though, about 1923, when the building was sold to the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, after which followed a series of ruthless partitioning and division, and the ripping out of many of those exquisite appointments which leant the Lagonda Club its aura.

But before the Club fell on hard times, its halls had rung with broad merriment, and several historic persons were entertained there.

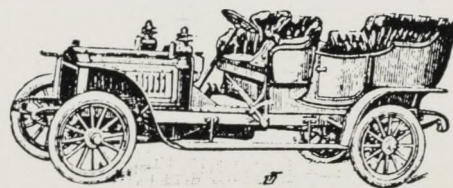
In September, 1905, Charles W. Fairbanks, then vice president of the United States, was honored with a reception there.

Asa S. Bushnell, former governor of Ohio, and a Springfield industrialist, was a charter member of the club. Receptions were held honoring Eugene Zimmerman, who at the time was president of the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad. S. D. Fess, a member of the House of Representatives and former president of Antioch College, was a guest as was Frank B. Willis, an Ohio governor and senator.

Springfield lawyer George B. Raup, who currently owns the building, notes that the most recent occupant of the building was the Warder Public Library Technical Service Dept., now moved to the Arcade Bldg.

The Chamber of Commerce, however, turned the spacious apartments of the Lagonda Club to more prosaic use, it now is divided into office space, Mr. Raup stated. No more to vibrate with the cream of Springfield's society.

Sic transit gloria mundi.





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gad Sir!

Dear Sir or Madam as the case may be—The article in our last edition of the magazine concerning “The Northern Lagonda Factory” requires a certain amount of comment in order to put the record straight.

Like all historians our northern secretary (beloved of Oldham Brewery amongst others—although I can’t think of any others at the moment) uses a certain modicum of facts to produce a picture which is biased to say the least! I do not doubt the technical quality of the article although most of this must be hearsay since considerable periods of time were spent under the dust sheet of an LG.6 with a lady of his choice inspecting the quality of leather upholstery. This of course accounts for a large proportion of the 276 hours which were spent on the ‘fire engine.’

All members will no doubt have notice that not only has his special changed over the years, but whatever happened to that clean-cut dedicated look shown in the photograph of CBU2C? This of course is left entirely unexplained but we can all draw our own conclusions!

### Answer to Hermes Quiz:

It is an M.45A with an 11 ft. 9 in. wheel-base belonging to Ray Stokes. Rumour has it that the car is fitted with one horizontal and one vertical magneto.

### MAGAZINE COPY

The Editor would be grateful if all contributions to the Summer Magazine are in his hands by:  
**JUNE 5th please**

As is stated work, for some of us, does intrude on our activities, and fortunately Brown seems finally to have lost that delicate aroma which pervaded for some time after he had dived fully clothed into the works sewage plant. For others in our group, however, certain attractions in London, which one could loosely term as social intercourse seems to have cut down the hours spent on the maintenance and restoration of these fine motor cars.

The external activities of the group in competition have not been covered, probably due to the considerable modesty of the author. The hours spent in serious and careful planning at the “Fox and Hounds” and the detailed discussion of what the prize should be (and where it should be put) for the winner of the bar skittles competition is but one item that has been omitted. The planned breakfast diet and sleeping arrangement for the drivers in order that they should arrive “on circuit” clear eyed and bounding with health is another.

I hope this helps to “round off” the picture of the Northern syndicate and put the author’s article in perspective. It is a compatible and enjoyable group who have spent many happy hours together and will it is hoped continue to do so for a long time to come.

THE CAPTAIN

Rapier Barracks,  
‘Nuts’ford,  
Cheshire.

### from Tony Wood

Dear Sir—I thought Herb Schofield’s article in the Winter Magazine, on “The Northern Lagonda Factory” was splendid. He did however, throw out some sort of challenge—at least I suppose that’s what it was—to Rapier owners in general, by stating: “...indeed she proved to be a splendid road vehicle with all that effortless performance which makes the 4½ such a relaxing car in comparison with the Rapier (that should start something!)”

Well, of course, Herb is quite right! No one in his right mind could possibly say the Rapier was a relaxing car to drive. Nor does it have effortless performance. But, it *is* highly exhilarating when driven with the correct application of verve, especially in town traffic, with its excellent steering and braking qualities. I lived in London for 8½ years and for most of that time owned one sort



of Rapier or another, and the ability to carve up the redoubtable London taxi gave one quite the most "one-upman" feeling possible! Try doing that with a 4½! I well remember on one occasion when I had the 4-door pillarless Eagle bodied Rapier saloon (it was black), being hailed by a bowler hatted gentleman, waving his umbrella. So convinced was he that BMX 275 was a taxi that he somewhat rashly stepped into the road, fully expecting the onrushing vehicle to stop and pick him up! Only deft work by yours truly, employing the extremely quick handling capabilities of the Rapier, prevented a very nasty accident! Try doing that with a 4½!

Last summer I was one of a party of five Rapierists who went on a tour of Germany to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Rapier. I can even now see Herb paling at the thought of all the bouncing and revving of those little cars attempting to keep up with the maniacal progress of German traffic on the Autobahns! Admittedly, the Autobahns were a bit dull and progress seemed never ending, but they were not used by the party much and the main road motoring was very acceptable. And the fabulous circuits of the Nürburgring which all the Rapiers did just suited the handlability of the cars. The steep bits were perhaps a little too steep for some though!

Personally I think all models of Lagonda have their place in the scheme of things. Some prefer one model, some another. It's nice to have such variety and especially nice to have so many members in the Club who are tolerant of the models with which they perhaps don't admire. Good natured repartee is the backbone of this sort of Club. Long may it remain!

TONY WOOD  
Birmingham.

#### KL 4062—Where are you?

Dear Sir—I have recently received Magazine Number 82 of our magazine and I was extremely pleased to see a new style of cover! F. Gordon Crosby's painting sums up our kind of motoring.

As a matter of interest did anyone see the film "Mrs. Miniver" starring Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon, which was shown on television on February 10th? There was another important star of the film, a Lagonda LG.45, Drophead Coupe, Registration No. (in the film) being KL 4062, which seemed to be in very good order.

We are curious to know where this Lagonda is today. We also thoroughly enjoyed the film.

A. HEARD  
Rainham,  
Essex.

#### V-12—Was it the same one?

Dear Sir—I was interested to see the lovely V-12 which appeared on the cover of Magazine No. 81. A friend of mine who was a protégé of Alan Goode, claimed that the V-12 d.h.c. he owned was the last one off the Staines production line. Being driven by him down Piccadilly in 1948 using full bore acceleration on down to Staines where he was Managing Director of Petters Ltd. was certainly an experience. But after he had blown the engine for the second time, Goode said it was too expensive to keep on repairing it.

It is just possible that this was the same car depicted on the cover. My friend bought Sir David Brown's own Aston Martin so I do not know what became of the V-12, but it is possible that it was kept by Petters and subsequently re-conditioned.

JOHN LANCASTER  
Buntingford,  
Herts.

#### From Peter Densham

Dear Sir—There must be many members like me who realise that we have a secretary and a secretariat but have no idea what the job involves nor how it is performed. As treasurer several years ago I had as much to do with the secretariat (from a distance) as anyone and yet I never stopped to think how Valerie May coped with the endless day-to-day correspondence as well as running a home and looking after two young children.

We are now near neighbours and on a recent Sunday we were invited to tea.

(This is the difficult part of the letter because our host is also the editor of the magazine so how do I write a pean of praise without reducing everyone to acute embarrassment?)

Well, I will stick to facts. The secretariat is extremely efficient and we should all count ourselves fortunate in having someone like Tony and Valerie May, who between them, give so much time to the club.



One complete room in a not very large house is given up to club affairs and most of the cupboards seem to be full of Lagonda stationery. Everything is perfectly tidy and one gets the impression that Valerie could find anything that was required at a moments notice.

Tony not only edits the magazine but now collects and carefully stores everything that he can possibly find of items of Lagonda interest—works photos, catalogues, reports. Among these I was delighted to see that he has on loan the original Lagonda Register photo album; the one carefully compiled by the late Clifford Rees and which at one time I thought was lost forever. Although the photos go back no further than 1947 they are already of extreme interest and I am very glad to hear that Tony is having copies made of the more dramatic pictures.

In fact my visit to No. 68 did more to assure me of the well-being of the club than anything else in recent years.

I do hope that our secretary and our editor will accept this word of thanks from one who would be very sorry if the Club ever failed to continue the enthusiasm and friendliness of its early members.

PETER DENSHAM  
East Grinstead, Sussex.

#### **Petters Ltd.**

Dear Sir—Having recently joined Petters, I see that my predecessor, Ken Gibbons, corresponded on various occasions with members of your Club, particularly about records and construction details of Causeway Works products.

I would be grateful if you could make it known that I will be delighted to try and help any member as far as I can—although I have never owned a Lagonda, I have had various examples of vintage A.C., Lancia, Morris and Delage, so my personal as well as business interests are with you!

R. K. JACKSON  
Publicity Manager,  
Petters Limited,  
Staines,  
Middlesex TW18 3AR.

#### **News from Australia**

Dear Sir—I note that my membership subscription fell due two days ago, and I would be glad to know how much it is so that it can be paid as soon as possible. When writing, could you also send me a club badge for my car, as the last one

was kindly uplifted by a (hopefully) appreciative passerby, whose obvious good taste was strongly overshadowed by his reprehensible light fingers!

My car (a DB 2.6 D.H.C.) is now quite complete and has covered several thousand miles since restoration, which was supervised by your Australian representative, Mr. Jim Whitehead, who offered much help and criticism and delivered regular dissertations on the deplorable standard of my workmanship!

The car is finished in blue polychromatic, with beige leather and carpets, and a beige material for the roof, and has whitewall tyres. The duco required only a good polish to make it almost as good as new, although a few scratches indicate a possible re-spray shortly. The leather is original and after treatment with leather soap is now good for some time yet. The roof was re-made, using English roofing vinyl, and together with the whitewall tyres (which were original equipment) the effect is quite striking!

The engine has required no attention whatever except a good tune, having not been in regular use since 1956, and having only covered 29,000 miles up to then. We fitted a 3-litre box as the column shift was pretty bad news, renewed some of the woodwork and overhauled the brakes, and the job was complete.

We replaced the intake silencer with small pancake-type filters, but the noise is such with these that they may be replaced with the original fitting. A complete re-wiring is to be done shortly, the original wiring showing signs of age in many places. It has been a most enjoyable experience restoring the Lagonda, which has so far provided me with very fast, reliable motoring, even on our apologies for roads!

I might add that the club badge was stolen while I was at a meeting of post-war thoroughbred British cars—mine was the only Lagonda present and was classified with a Mk. VI Bentley and a DB 2/4 and DB 4 Aston-Martin: quite a representative little selection of the marque and its associates! There are very few other Lagondas on the road out here, and the most active club for British makes, apart from the MG Club, is the Armstrong-Siddeley Club which has a large and most enthusiastic following, together with some very fine machines which quite inspired me to continue work on my car!

PETER WOODWARD  
New South Wales,  
Australia.



