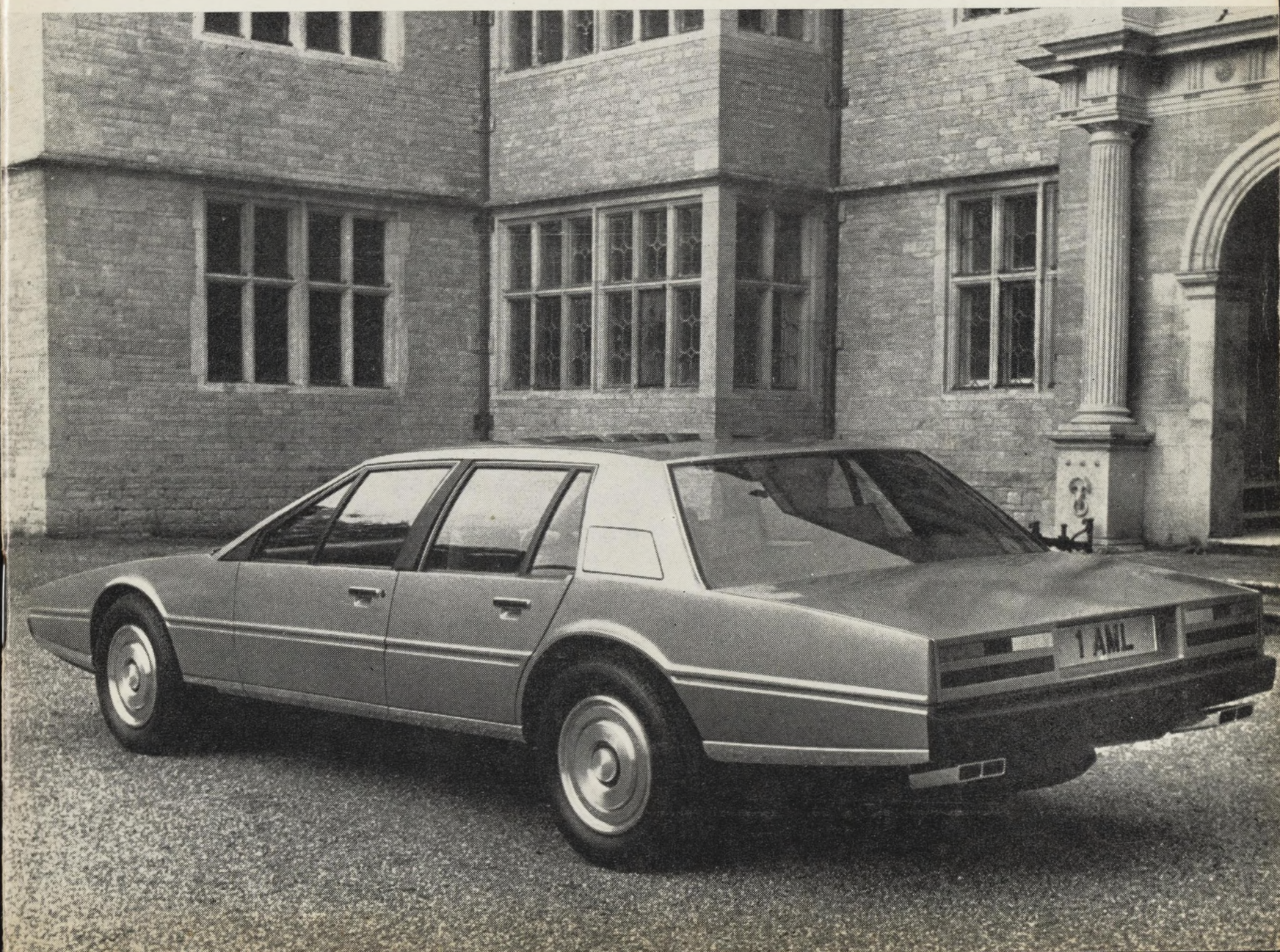




# **THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB**

**Number 93   Winter 1976**





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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: The remarkable new Aston Martin Lagonda.



## Out and About

The Club's new style AGM—ANNUAL DINNER held in November was without doubt one of the most successful events organised by the Committee in recent years.

It is well known that the average Club member is hard to enthuse when it comes to attending Club functions, especially the AGM. But as the programme this year was re-scheduled and incorporated a Dinner Dance with the facility of staying overnight the Committee hoped for a larger than usual response. Its faith in human nature was justified. Cunning positioning of the venue at the Burnham Beeches Hotel in Bucks enabled a wider catchment area of members to be sought. In theory it was an easy place for *anyone* to get to! This seemed to work out in practice, as far more Lagondas (at least 50 or more), turned up on the Saturday. The AGM followed with the Concours being judged while we were being welcomed by James Crocker and Herb Schofield.

Seemingly members were quite happy with the way the Club's affairs were being conducted and shortly after remarkable transformations of dress and hairstyles took place as members made their way to pre-dinner drinks at the bar. An excellent dinner was provided followed by dancing to the early hours. About ninety people were present to enjoy the evening and everybody looked as though they were enjoying themselves. We were especially pleased to see Mr. and Mrs. Jacobsen and Mr. John Lazor from the States.

The following morning those who had stayed overnight made their way down to breakfast—Alan Brown was observed wincing at the noise when somebody cracked a boiled egg at a nearby table. Herb Schofield was bright and cheerful.

Gradually people made their way home—a great weekend! Thanks to the organisers: Robby Hewitt, Duncan Westall and David Johnston.

Come again next year!

\* \* \* \*

Your Committee is pleased to announce that PETER SPRAGUE and GEORGE MINDEN, Co-Chairmen of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd., have both become Honorary Members of the Lagonda Club. We are very pleased that there is now a firm link between Newport Pagnell and our Club and we all wish every success to the new Lagonda.

\* \* \* \*

A very pleasant afternoon out during August

was had by those who attended the Southern Social at Parham House in Sussex. The lovely old house in rolling downsland scenery with attractive grounds was open to visitors, and Club members enjoyed a guided tour of the house which has a fine collection of paintings and some interesting rooms with period furniture.

\* \* \* \*

A newsy Newsletter is now enjoyed by our American members with reports from their domestic front. Edited by BOB OHNSTAD, it is doing a great service in bringing U.S. members closer together in spirit if not physically, remembering the vast distances which separate the majority of them. BOB CRANE reports that Bob's efforts have resulted in attracting new members to the Club. So well done both Bobs!

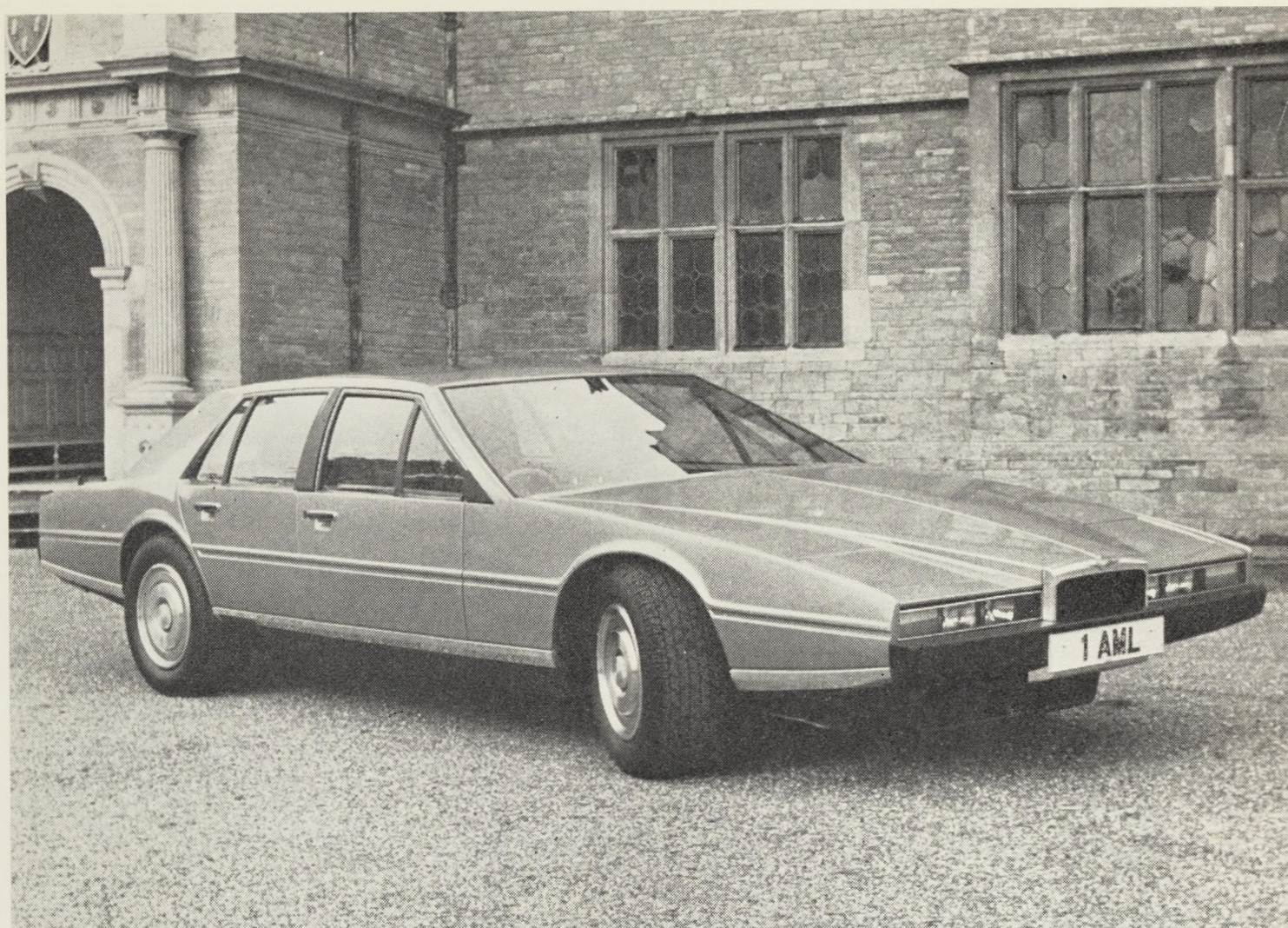
## Lagonda Reborn

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE DIRECTORS OF Aston Martin Lagonda and their Press Officer Geoff Courtney, a number of us were invited to be present at the Press launch of the exciting new Lagonda sports limousine just prior to the Earls Court Motor Show.

The venue was the Bell Inn at Aston Clinton in Buckinghamshire. We all arrived in good time and amongst Club Lagondas parked on display were the two M.45R Le Mans cars of David Johnston and Robby Hewitt; Herb Schofield's LG.45 Rapide; Maurice Leo's V.12 d.h.c.; John Lancaster's D.B. 3-litre; Freda Roberts' 11.9 h.p. and M. Wenman's 2-litre high chassis.

The Press and Club members were welcomed by the Directors and in due time the curtains were pulled back from the Conference area and there stood the new Lagonda. The low, long aerodynamic lines of the coachwork belied its length (17 ft. 4 in.) and width (5 ft. 11½ in.). It looked every inch a Super Luxury Gran Turismo. Soon everyone was clustered round taking turns to sit inside and enjoy the comfort of the deeply upholstered seating. The interior had a futuristic appearance in that there were seemingly no instruments, gear selector or push buttons to be seen. All was revealed on an adjacent cockpit module display which demonstrated that when a door was opened the selector switches lit up and that these were operated by touch only; when the key is placed in the ignition the instruments light up. These were particularly comprehensive with normal ribbon style displays combined with





The new Lagonda shows off its lines

digital readings. The electronic system allowed for an amazing amount of information to be had by the driver—an instantaneous fuel consumption reading for example.

From behind the wheel of the static car there seemed an awful lot of bonnet up front and body width, but I understand that like all big cars with superb steering the driver quickly gets used to taking a large car through traffic. Apart from the V.8 engine, the whole car is a completely new design and the prototype car took only seven months to produce!

An excellent lunch followed with an obviously enthused audience still buzzing about the car. From all angles the coachwork, hand crafted aluminium, looked superb while the sophistication of its controls and instruments placed it years ahead of its rivals. After lunch, the new car was positioned with its more venerable cousins which in turn attracted a great deal of interest from Peter Sprague who with George Minden were responsible for taking over the ailing com-

pany and getting it back onto its feet. They had every reason to be elated with their new model and it was significant for we Club members to hear Peter Sprague acknowledge the responsibility they felt when following in the line of the older Lagondas that were on display.

For technical details the following information was provided by Aston Martin Lagonda.

In conclusion, our most grateful thanks to the Aston Martin Lagonda Company for their welcome and hospitality

A.W.M.

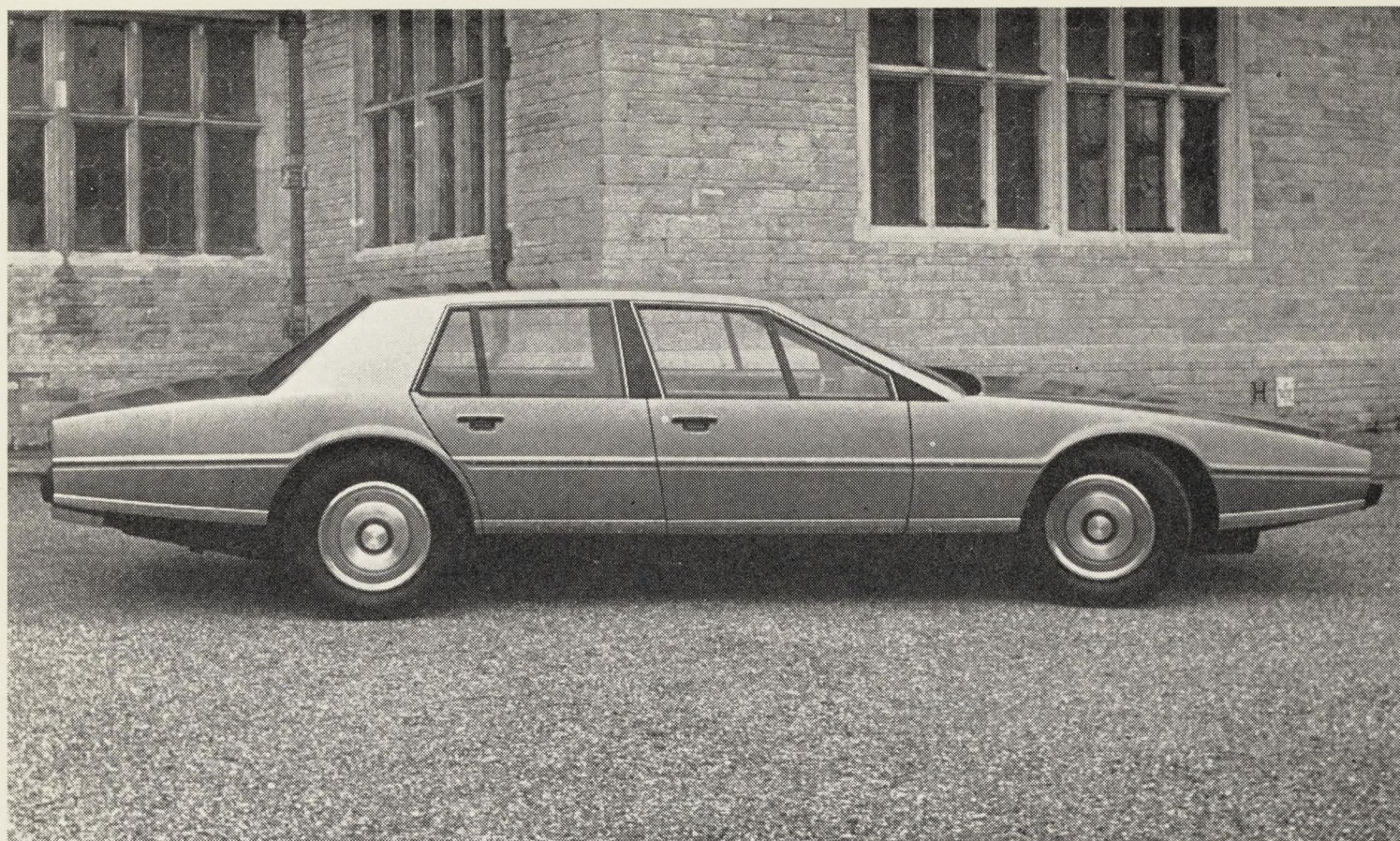
\* \* \* \*

#### **ASTON MARTIN LAGONDA**

A super-luxury car which incorporates some of the most advanced features in the world is announced by Aston Martin Lagonda.

This four-door car carries the Aston Martin Lagonda badge. It was styled by William Towns, who was also responsible for the 155 m.p.h. two-door Aston Martin, which continues in production.





The aerodynamic profile

### *Futuristic Interior*

The futuristic interior embodies a new approach to the concept of luxury car accommodation, and among the features are electronically-controlled instruments which incorporate graphic and digital displays, and touch switches for all the controls, including the automatic gear box selection.

The use of the instrumentation was the brain-child of Aston Martin chief engineer Mike Loasby, and incorporates a speedo with m.p.h./k.p.h. changeover operated by a touch switch, rev counter, oil pressure and temperature gauges, water temperature and fuel gauges, a voltmeter and an ammeter. There are also interior and exterior temperature gauges, a digital clock which also shows the date, and an electronically-controlled display showing the average speed and fuel consumption on a journey, combined with a speed/instantaneous fuel consumption reading. This display also has an elapsed time and distance reading.

The instruments, which form a fascia extending the width of the car, eschew the conventional dials and needles, and instead have electronic ribbon-style scales which give the necessary readings. A further aid to the driver is a row of 16 warning lights.

Sensitive touch switches enhance the interior's futuristic air, and these control the side, head, spot, fog, fascia and interior lights, the electric windows, door locking and front and rear seat adjustment, cruise control, air conditioning, two-speed wipers which also have flick and intermittent facilities, horns, indicators and hazard warning lights. Even the automatic gearbox selection is operated by touch switches, and the doors can be programmed to lock automatically on leaving the car.

New and advanced seating, departing from tradition in style, but retaining the comfort and luxury associated with a prestige car such as this, has been designed for the Lagonda by KAN of Toronto.

Motorway and trunk road driving will be greatly assisted by the cruise control, by which the car remains at a constant speed set by the driver, whatever the gradient. It is cancelled by using the footbrake, accelerator, or, in the case of the manual model, the clutch, and it can be manually over-ridden.

Interior equipment also includes air conditioning designed specifically for the car, a control on the steering column for adjusting the position of the brake and accelerator pedals, a



radio-stereo unit, front seats which have power adjustments for rake, height, fore and aft, and rear seats which are individually adjustable for rake electrically.

Quality hide is used for the upholstery and most of the trim, and a feature of the body is a glass panel in the roof above the rear passenger compartment.

Armrests incorporating illuminated ashtrays and cigar lighters are located on all four doors, and there are also four reading lights and four further interior lights, including footwell illumination. There is also lighting for the large boot, which is opened from the interior, glove box and engine compartment.

The rack and pinion steering has two-stage power assistance which gives greater help at low speed, and the 14-inch diameter, leather-rimmed, single-spoke steering wheel has just two turns from lock to lock.

#### *Lighting*

Four pop-up halogen headlamps provide forward illumination, while at the rear are twin reversing lights. There are also two fog and two spot lights fitted behind a glass screen. The turn signals and rear brake lights have increased daytime intensity, and all four doors are fitted with red safety lights in the opening edges.

#### *Engine and Transmission*

Power is provided by Aston Martin's own V.8 engine which was introduced in 1969. This four overhead-camshaft, 5,340 c.c. unit has a light-alloy block and cylinder head, and will give the Lagonda a top speed in excess of 140 m.p.h. and acceleration to 60 m.p.h. in about seven seconds. It is fed by four twin-choke Weber carburettors.

Standard equipment includes a Torqueflite three-speed automatic gearbox whose ratios are electrically selected by means of touch switches mounted on the fascia. Customers may specify a manual version if they desire, and in which case a ZF five-speed box would be fitted. There is a limited slip differential.

#### *Suspension*

The independent front suspension incorporates transverse unequal length wishbones, coil springs and an anti-roll bar, while the De Dion rear suspension is self-levelling and utilises coil springs and telescopic dampers.

#### *Safety*

As with all Aston Martin and Lagonda cars, safety has played an important part in the development of this new model. The aluminium body is mated to a rigid steel superstructure and safety platform chassis, and the interior is designed to meet all the occupant protection standards anywhere in the world.

Equipment includes collapsible sun visors and steering column, breakaway interior driving mirror, anti-burst door locks, and a laminated safety glass windscreen. Sundym glass is used throughout.

The braking system is a development of that used in the two-door Aston Martin, which is acknowledged to be one of the most efficient in the world. There are ventilated discs front and rear with independent hydraulic circuits, and tandem master cylinder and integral servo. The fly-off handbrake carries on a company tradition.

A new style of wheel has been designed for the Lagonda, and this has 7-inch wide rims and GR 70 VR 15 radial tyres.

One of the new Lagondas will be exhibited at the Earl's Court Motor Show, which opens tomorrow (October 20th), but the car will not be on sale to the public until next Spring.

#### **ASTON MARTIN LAGONDA**

Engine—V.8; four overhead camshafts; bore 100 mm; stroke 85 mm; 5,340 c.c. Maximum power and torque not quoted. Light alloy block and cylinder head. Compression ratio 9:1.

Carburettors—Four twin-choke Weber down-draught.

Transmission — Torqueflite three-speed automatic. Ratios: low 2.45:1; intermediate 1.45:1; top 1.00:1; reverse 2.20:1.

Final drive—Ratio: 3.07:1. Limited slip differential.

Front suspension—Independent, incorporating transverse unequal length wishbones and ball jointed king pins. Co-axial coil springs and large diameter telescopic shock absorbers. Anti-roll bar. Rear suspension—De Dion axle located by parallel trailing arms and Watt linkage. Self-levelling system incorporating coil springs and telescopic dampers.

Steering—Rack and pinion. 14-inch diameter, leather rimmed, single-spoke steering wheel. Variable ratio assistance. Collapsible steering column. Steering lock. Two turns lock to lock. Turning circle: 38 ft. 0 in.



**Brakes**—Ventilated discs front and rear, with independent front/rear hydraulic circuits. Tandem master cylinder with integral servo. Fly-off handbrake. Hydraulic fluid level, handbrake and pad wear warning lights.

**Instrumentation**—Speedometer with m.p.h./k.p.h. changeover facility, rev counter, oil pressure and temperature gauges, water temperature and fuel level gauges, voltmeter, ammeter. Interior and exterior temperature gauges, digital clock with date. Average speed and fuel consumption display, combined with speed/instantaneous fuel consumption reading, and elapsed time and distance reading.

**Equipment**—Front seats power-adjustable for rake, height and fore and aft; individual rear seats power-adjustable for rake; central rear folding armrest; armrests in all four doors incorporating ashtray and cigar lighter; central electric door locking; four reading lights; four interior lights incorporating courtesy switches on all four doors; interior boot control; lockable glove box;

pile carpeting; air conditioning; radio-stereo unit; electric aerial; two-speed wipers with flick and intermittent facility; high and low intensity horns; brake and accelerator pedal adjustment; cruise control; laminated safety glass windscreen; Sundym glass throughout; heated rear window; glass panel in roof above rear compartment; under-bonnet, boot and glovebox lights; four pop-up halogen headlights; twin reversing lights; day-night intensity for brake lights and indicators; red safety lights on opening edges of doors; fog and spot lights; quality hide used for upholstery and most of trim.

**Length**—17 ft. 4 in. (528.3 cm).

**Width**—5 ft. 11½ in. (181.6 cm).

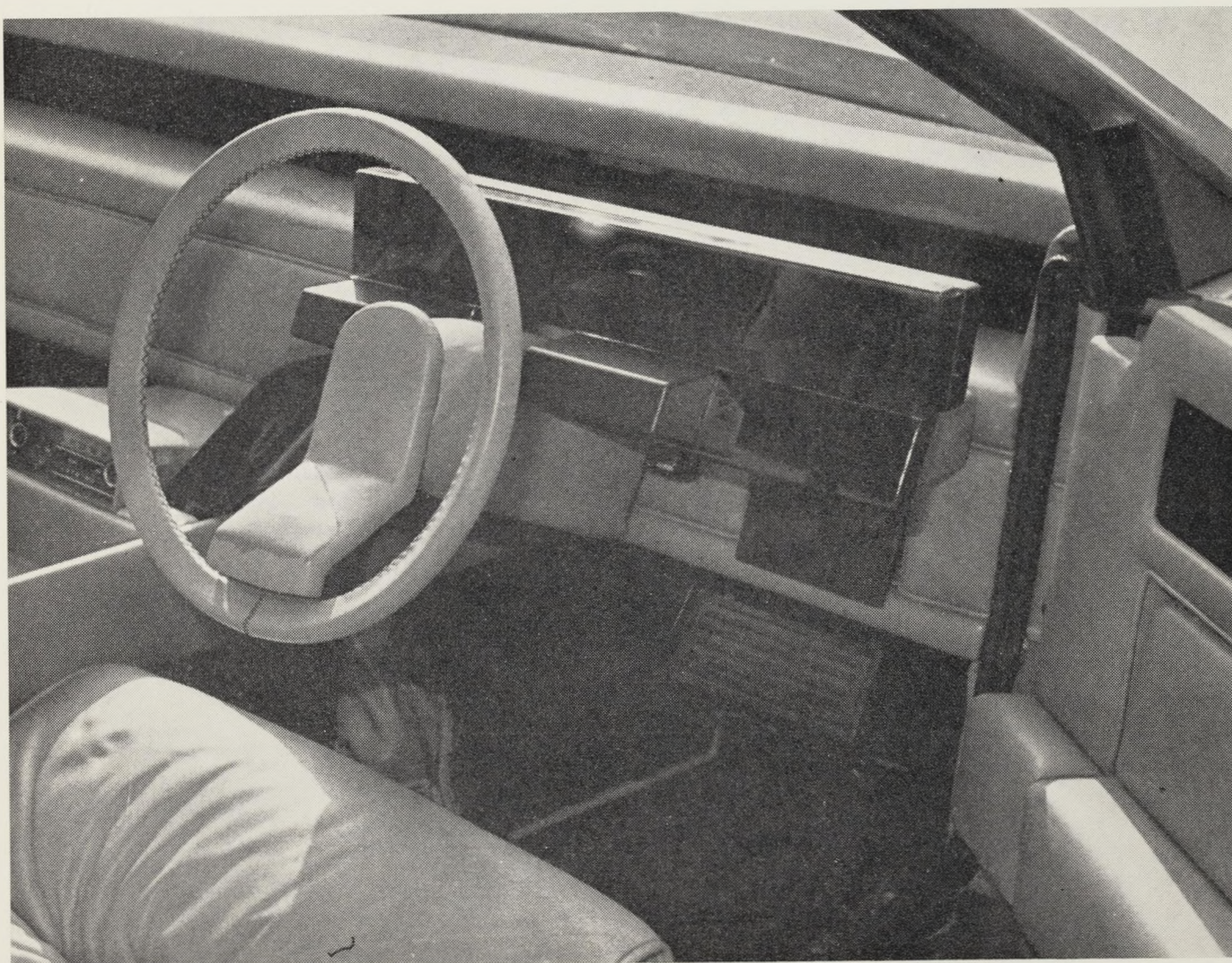
**Height**—4 ft. 3¼ in. (130.2 cm).

**Wheelbase**—9 ft. 6¾ in. (291.5 cm).

**Kerb Weight**—3,800 lb. (33.9 cwt., 1,727 kg).

**Tank Capacity**—28 gallons (128 litres) including five gallon (23 litres) reserve capacity.

**Boot Capacity**—13 cu. ft.



The futuristic interior



## "The Swop"

IT ALL STARTED WHEN HARRY SAID HE WAS looking for a pair of headlights suitable for his 1928 Packard 6th Series Straight "8". Harry was more a friend of my elder brother than me, but I used quite often meet him where he lived in Islington because he, like me, was a car nut. He used to get involved in the most complicated rebuilds, particularly Roesch Talbots and Rum-Tum-Tiddleleys (Armstrong Siddeleys) which often meant stepping over various large oily objects scattered like Autumn leaves through his two roomed flat. He rescued cars residing on farms as chicken coops, resting flat tyred and grimey in breaker's yards or swopped for his labour in redecorating flats. He then, with amazing ability and craftsmanship rebuilt and renewed them from back to front. Unfortunately his financial state was such, that each rebuild drained him of all monetary stability and he had to sell each rebuild at a fraction of its cost to him to enable his family to eat. So there was an endless stream of interesting cars coming, being worked on and going.

The particular apple of his eye at the moment I speak of was this black Packard hearse. Most unimposing and equipped, if I recall correctly with two starters and dynamos to obviate that most feared moment in any funeral directors life, a breakdown on the way to the cemetery. Did you know, by the way, that old Henry Ford after producing some twenty-five million Ford's was, ironically, borne to his final resting place in a Packard? The Packard of Harry's, was equipped with extremely low gearing to allow it to potter along at 2 m.p.h. and also, naturally in 1928, had a hand throttle. These items allowed Harry to steer this macabre ensemble through crowded London traffic with both his feet on the dash. The overall picture was hardly enhanced by yours truly laying flat out on the bier smoking cigarettes and blowing smoke rings. Anyway Harry lacked a suitable pair of headlights for the hearse's rebuild and so when he mentioned this to me, I remembered that on purchasing my first car, a pillarless M.45 saloon the last owner had kindly given me a spare set of P100s. Being short, as usual, of the readies Harry could not purchase the P100s outright, so he said he would swop them for his standby runabout which was then a green 1947 side valve Humber Hawk. This monument to Rootes Brother's ingenuity was

languishing outside, so, after the obligatory tyre kicking, I agreed to the transaction. The only problem was that the M.45 and its spare lights were down at a friend's house in Kent nearby the place that was still vainly trying to educate me. So it was further agreed that part of the 'swop' was for me to collect the P100s in the Humber. I set forth next day with a good friend of mine, to collect the lights. What Harry had 'forgotten' to tell me about was that one of the big ends on the Humber was barely on talking terms with its con rod. So we proceeded down the Old Kent Road with a tapping noise coming from the engine like a beserk triangle player. Being, then, ignorant of the fatal meaning of this percussion noise I decided to ignore it. Passing Lewisham, Brands Hatch, Maidstone and then Harrietsham on the A20 the noise became worse till when confronted with the steep Charing Hill the big end and the con rod decided to part company and I experienced for the first time that invigorating discovery 'a leg out of bed' as the con rod appeared for air through the crank case. We pushed the Humber onto a grass verge and eventually hitched a lift from a man in a Hillman Husky who drove down to Kent like a man pursued by devils, quite probably inspired by the picture of his wife and kids stuck on the dashboard.

When I returned to Harry laden with the P100s he was delighted but when I advised him of the Humber's demise, he was less pleased. "The police will trace it to me", he exclaimed, "it wasn't taxed or M.O.T'd and I'll get done or you will". So we decided to go down to Charing and either tow the Humber back or 'lose' it in the countryside. So next day we ventured forth with a friend of Harry's in his mint grey 1935 Armstrong 17 h.p. Saloon. This had foolishly been exchanged for a very rare, fast and desirable Siddeley Special Tourer. It was evident on the journey down that we would, through ignition gremlins, have trouble getting back ourselves let alone towing a Humber. So when we arrived at the forlorn Hawk we resolved that after removing the number plates, chassis plate, the clock, the seats, the batteries we would hide it away permanently from legal revenge. Having removed all evidence and loot we looked around for a suitable last resting place. Downhill in the distance we saw a rutted track leading to a farm by which stood a deep, grey pond, so we decided to push the Hawk down the hill, across the main road, along the



track and into the pond. Off we went, the Hawk gathering speed till along the track it was travelling at a fair old lick, then with one mighty final heave we let go and watched the Hawk splash into the pond and reach the middle with the water just lapping the running boards. The pond was not as deep as we hoped, so taking off our shoes and socks and rolling up our trousers and trying not to peer too hard into the murky waters we heaved the now soggy Humber out. We scanned the countryside looking again for a hiding place when one of our party suggested that since the farm looked rather deserted why didn't we push the car into an open fronted nearby shed and scarper. What a good idea! The fact that there was an almost brand new tractor already in the shed did not deter us. We started the tractor, moved it out, pushed the Humber in, replaced the tractor and left, hoping the farmer wouldn't notice it. Thus relieved of our burden we travelled back to London in a more heavily laden and even slower Armstrong.

Strangely enough after all our precautions one week later Harry received a letter from the farmer. Our shock was understandable. To this day the only solution that comes to mind is that a police patrol had seen the Humber on the verge of the A20 and had noted the registration, which had been given to the farmer when he wanted to leave the car at the police station as lost property. Harry wrote to the farmer generously denoting the Humber to him and permitting him to have anything it might realise as scrap. A week later the farmer wrote again saying a local car breaking firm had charged him £4 for its removal and could Harry send a refund. Harry, never a great correspondent, wrote back, this time left handed, saying that he was a new tenant at the flat and the old tenant whose Humber it was had just finally departed for New Zealand. We heard no more.

F.31

**Have you paid  
your subs?  
If not please do so  
without delay.**

## Hull & East Riding Members' Notes

THE SOCIAL EVENTS ORGANISED BY TED AND Eleanor Townsley have been going on for years and it is almost tradition that the Club's thanks are expressed in Hermes' notes. Their 1976 Garden Party was the best attended ever and the usual genial hospitality was enjoyed by all. The programme continued its current form and this year the special treat was a film show by a commercial company in film productions of their movie, "Indoor Games at Newbury", together with colour slides of production details, a fascinating revelation. Ted had a small part in the film, his LG.45 tourer had a bigger part and very well acquitted itself. The fact that the film was a perfect mime to a track of the Sir John Betjeman record reviewed by Roy Paterson in the last Lagonda Magazine is pure co-incidence.

It is hoped that the picture expresses the thanks of those who enjoyed it all by reflecting the welcome of Eleanor and Ted to their sunlit orchard and including one of the cars whose crews they love to entertain.

(Picture on page 17)

HERMES I

## The Lagondas at Cadwell

THE VERY FIRST VSCC MEETING AT CADWELL PARK (vintage cars never been allowed before—regulations and all that—presumably too big and clumsy) and there on the front row of the grid for the first event, and it was a scratch race . . . a Lagonda!

This was Peter Nickalls in his green Rapier, much of which originated from the same stock as the Fletcher-Jones thoroughbred and like theirs is shared in the family. Peter and his young wife Enid seem to have a race each at every meeting and in point of fact she is at the wheel in the picture. It has been reported that in her racing baptism at Silverstone in May, she came in second. But here at Cadwell she came in from practice somewhat disturbed by low oil-pressure and could it be something to do with cold-soldered oilpipe joints. Still, it was the car's first season and it had been a full one including May and July Silverstones with the VSCC, and also the BDC meeting there the day before Cadwell.



Happy to see Peter had sorted out the pressure problem because there he was on the front row with ten other rows behind him.

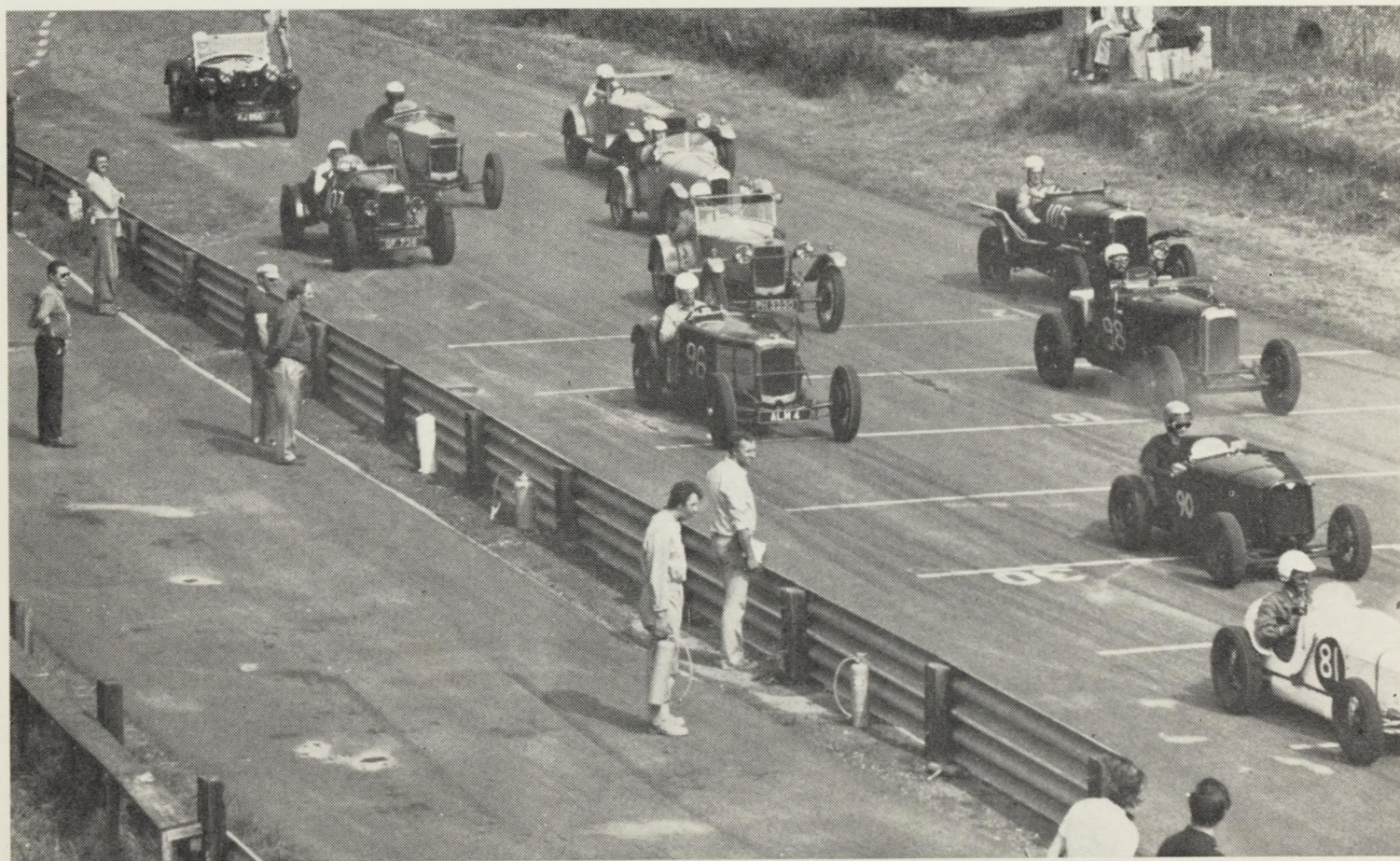
Races for cars under two litres were limited to 22 starters, over two litres the limit was further reduced to 14 cars. In all races they were on the grid in staggered pairs. And no doubt all drivers circulating on their merry way were thinking how narrow it is compared with Silverstone and how difficult it will be to nip past and overtake on much of this truly rural undulating wooded circuit.

At the end of lap one Nickalls was close second to the AC Special with the usual 1991 c.c. that had been alongside on the front row. After two laps he was a closer second and already some twenty seconds ahead of third man. Then the Rapier failed somewhere on the next lap and incidentally the AC failed on the fifth and final lap. The focal point of Lagonda attention was now R. J. Hutchings, also Rapier mounted, who started from seventh row. He didn't appear to pass anyone but at least he finished fourteenth, beating two Nashes of 1496 c.c. The winner turned out to be an Alvis of 1842 c.c., a car which Nickalls had beaten at the other venue.

\* \* \* \*

Any body in the paddock with 'Lagonda Rapier' specially emblazoned across the well-stretched front of its covering T-shirt proclaims an obvious enthusiast for that model, and when the back of the shirt spells out 'James' the enthusiast is obviously (i) our active competing President, and (ii) pleased with his car's performance the day before; reported, I trust, elsewhere. So this was Crocker at Cadwell.

The programme showed his car was the smallest, but his first race was a handicap, so that should even out the engine sizes. Yet there he was on the grid with eleven bigger cars between him and the starter, and only two behind. Well, this is the very stuff that competitive characters relish, especially drivers of the calibre of James and John and David, our Club's Rapier-thrusting unholy trinity of Crocker, Abson, and Fletcher-Jones respectively. However, there is not much room to overtake at Cadwell so a limitman's BMW led all the way from start to finish. With sustained effort Crocker overtook on each of his five laps to finish a praiseworthy seventh, and neither of the two behind him on the grid, a Frazer Nash and a very special Riley with V.8 Autovia engine, came anywhere near, finishing thirteenth and fourteenth of the fourteen starters.



Rapier (No. 98) at the Start—R. J. Hutchings

Photo: Roy Paterson



Your reporter is of the opinion that sometimes, though admittedly far from always, there is a lot of handicap luck in this kind of race, the winner having an ill-calculated share of good fortune; perhaps it is more meritorious to achieve the fastest lap. Our President did just that, lapping at a splendid 62.69 m.p.h. And to put that into perspective other fastest laps were 59.12 (AC Special), 59.65 (1496 c.c. Nash), and 60.45 (AC again).

\* \* \* \*

Next event was for the Spero Trophy, an 8-lap Scratch Race for cars under 1100 c.c. On sixth row was R. D. Seath, his bare-metal Rapier just squeezing in under the capacity limit. Crocker was not there having 1232 c.c., but David Fletcher-Jones in his similarly long tailed shapely Rapier was there and in pole position of course as befitted the Spero Trophy winner of 1973, 1974 and 1975. Menacingly close was the Riley driver who had won it in 1970 and 1972 and had also had a win here two races earlier. So this contest promised to be one of the highlights, a real humdinger. It became that real humdinger and surprisingly was not reported in either *Motoring News* or *Motor Sport*.

Somehow the Riley led and the terrific scrap stimulated the commentators into voluble excitement. Whatever they saw on their parts of the circuit your reporter's attention was gripped by the action on The Mountain, a short sharp left and right going up an apparent one-in-three with a flat bit in between. Here, Fletcher-Jones was snapping at the heels of the Riley on the approach. He tried to pass going up on the right but did not quite make it. Another lap they went up almost wheel to wheel but the Riley stuck to the better line for the top righthander. Next time the Riley was on a tighter line for the bottom lefthander. Nevertheless our man tried to force his way through on the left.

"Very naughty", said an older spectator on my immediate right, who had once owned a 2-litre Lagonda.

"Should never try to pass on the inside like that. Too dangerous", involuntarily added his colleague who keeps a collection of vintage sports cars in a disused railway building.

"That's the stuff. Great!" yelled a gesticulating energetic youngster dangerously close behind me. On my left, Enid was speechless.

The two cars were momentarily level and it was a very very close thing. The Riley was certainly

put off line but managed to maintain the lead.

Fletcher-Jones must have made up his mind to pass next time up The Mountain, whatever. . . . They came in sight side by side with the Riley a whisker in front, Fletcher-Jones being on the outside for the steep left. Trying too hard and motoring a little too fast he went wide and slid on to the grass. He kept his foot hard down and calculatingly shot across the rough stuff on the infield of the righthander, carving himself a more-than-little-bit off the top. The Rapier's tail was hanging out to such an extent that a rear wheel was first on to the tarmac as he regained the track, and he was in the lead. For a split second of time. With masterful control he kept tight on the edge in a forward direction. He had to. The imperturbable Riley man kept his foot very flat to the floor, kept where he ought-ter, and maintained so much more momentum that he swept close past and into first position again. (It takes longer to read about it than it took to observe the whole manoeuvre.)

Proving to himself that even a Rapier is not as fast at autocross as at circuit racing, what would young David try next? Here was the Riley again, possibly a fraction slower, so now what could be their tactics of derring-do? It was a raising of the hand by Fletcher-Jones, unfortunately, and instead of turning right at the top he took the slip road and slowly continued towards the paddock. Hard luck indeed.

Seath's Rapier was still running but was never really in the hunt, finishing twelfth out of sixteen starters.

No-one of course managed to catch the Riley, and congratulations to its tenacious and completely unflappable driver in his hard fought victory. He also got fastest lap—and no wonder with that pressure behind him—at 63.68 m.p.h. (Estimated fastest lap by Fletcher-Jones, 63.67½ m.p.h.)

\* \* \* \*

A four lap handicap then brought our first 4½ to grips with Cadwell. It was Roger Firth's replica sitting all alone at the back of the grid to start 3 mins. 10 secs. after the limit man, and just 10 secs. behind a very competitive trio of a handy Lambda, the Alvis winner of event one, and the AC with its fastest lap. The trio should have been a quartet but the Nickall's Rapier was presumably still off song. Seath also non-started but the Hutchings Rapier was present. Firth managed to squeeze in a bit of overtaking and he



finished tenth with Seath a few places behind.

\* \* \* \*

From the programme the penultimate event promised to be a good one for Lagondas with Firth's again representing the Northern Lagonda factory, this time together with Hall's similar car and Alastair Barker's V.12; and also Crocker in his Rapier. Barker had the entry but no car, Firth put his 4½ into the paddock on lap two, so it was up to Hall and Crocker. Race positions of the first three, including Hall who finished third, never altered on the lap chart for the whole of the race. Meanwhile Crocker was seizing every opportunity to nip past and was up to eighth, seventh and sixth on the first three laps, passed an HRG and a 4½ Invicta on the next, and was gaining visibly on Hall, to finish a creditable fourth.

\* \* \* \*

The final race, being at the end of a long programme at the end of a very good season, had nine non-starters. Hall was the only representative left for our Club. It was a four lap handicap event, and he was on the fourth row. Completing

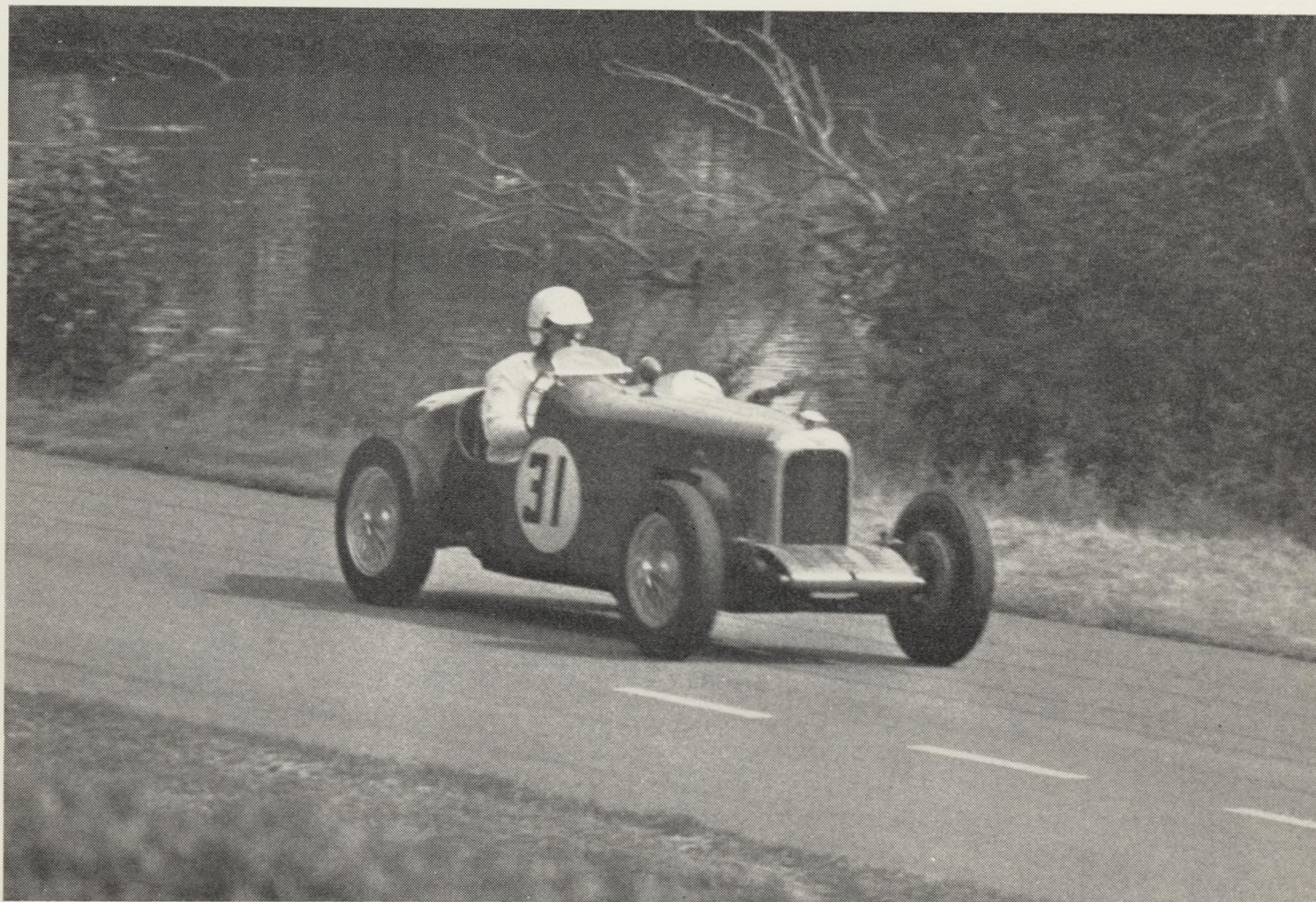
lap one he was fourth, but on the second lap he improved to third and that is where he finished, deserving our congratulations on being the most successful Lagonda driver of the day—two entries with two third places, whilst the President was next, his two entries culminating in a 7th, a 4th, and a fastest lap.

\* \* \* \*

The three other races had none of our cars entered, but the ten-lapper for the Williams Monaco Trophy cries out to be reported.

The trophy itself was first awarded at the initial Monaco Grand Prix in 1929 when it was won in a Bugatti by William Grover-Williams, an Englishman, whose family presented it to the BOC. This august body do not have races so they passed it on to the VSCC. Only 2-seat G.P. cars are eligible, since they were current in 1929.

The general hope for sentimental reasons was for a Bugg to win and with seven entered they were in with a chance. VSCC President Bernard Kain was the favourite. Other entries were one each of Monza Alfa, Aston Martin, Frazer Nash, and a Straker Squire of 1918 vintage.



D. Fletcher-Jones (Rapier) on the finishing straight

Photo: Roy Paterson



The Alfa was left behind at the start as it refused to fire when pushed. They pushed it far along the track until in despair it was manhandled round to return to the grid. The others must have been over half a lap ahead by now, anyway. Suddenly it burst into Life with a capital 'L' whereat Chris Mann reversed it across the tarmac then absolutely shot forward on the correct line leaving two very black smoky streaks behind him. By the end of lap five, by incredible driving which almost defies description, he was actually in the lead and then, cruel fate, he hit a bale and had to get out and remove the remains from his steed. This cost him some four places but by lap seven he was second, and on the ninth back in front! A stupendous race, and expectedly he netted fastest lap as well as the Trophy. For the record a Bugatti was second and the Straker-Squire a praiseworthy third.

\* \* \* \*

I'm very happy that I was there for this memorable VSCC meeting and my thanks to their Secretary without whose co-operation the details could not have been so fully reported.

And Vintage Cadwell will be held again in 1977; on Sunday, 28th August.

ROY PATERSON

## Q-Type Lagonda

Lagonda (Q) DB 290/1/240

Hong Kong Registration No. AA 4382

Engine Type 6B6H (DBA) Special

FROM ALL APPEARANCES AA 4382 WOULD SEEM TO be a normal production 3-litre DB Lagonda and only after a detailed examination is it realised that this car is somewhat special, hence the "Q".

Lagonda DB (later to become "Q") was collected from the works in May 1957 by the present owner, it was sitting alone in the despatch bay and looked every inch a thoroughbred.

After three months of most enjoyable high speed motoring in the U.K. covering some 10,000 miles, the car was returned to the works to be prepared for delivery to Hong Kong, apart from packing for shipment no work was required, as the car was in excellent condition.

When first put on the road in Hong Kong, the performance was disappointing, this however was due to the poor quality petrol then available, this problem was soon cured by the addition of aviation fuel.

Despite the better results obtained by the use

of improved fuel, it was felt that the car was capable of a better overall performance, so various modifications were carried out gradually over a fair period.

Before going into detail regarding these, the following list of additions and modifications will give some idea as to the time and care lavished on this rather special car.

These are:

- a) Twin Exhaust Pipes.
- b) New Intake Manifolds designed and three Carburettors fitted.
- c) Inlet Ports enlarged.
- d) Power Steering installed.
- e) Wheel Rims modified and oversize Tyres fitted.
- f) Disc Brakes fitted.
- g) Alternator fitted in place of Dynamo.
- h) Micro Manual Ignition control fitted.
- i) Additional Indicator Lights fitted.

### TWIN EXHAUSTS

Twin Exhaust Pipes were fitted for three reasons, the first and the most important being the search for every additional ounce of power, secondly twin pipes were becoming very fashionable and lastly they did improve the rear view of the car.

The pipe work design was virtually that of the DB Aston Martin, layout drawing of this being kindly provided by the works. In carrying out this job stainless steel tubing was used throughout.

The nearside pipe required modification where it crossed under the rear of the gear box in order to maintain reasonable ground clearance, at this point a short section of pipe was fabricated giving the same area as the original pipe but having a flatter section.

Oval shaped Primary and Secondary silencers were made up to specific requirements by 'Servais' in their Servard Material and although comparatively silent, the car still has a healthy purr.

### THREE CARBURETTORS

Having read with great interest "The Sports Engine" by Colin Cambel, M.Sc., A.M.I.Mec.E., "Engine Tuning" by P. E. Irving, M.I.Mec.E., M.S.A.E. and "Carburation" by C. H. Fisher, M.E.Mec.E., M.S.A.E. it seemed obvious that with the right application, additional power and acceleration could be obtained by using three carburettors in place of the original two S.U. units.



Space in the engine room rather limited the choice of layout; the final design however, was based on ideas gathered from the aforementioned literature, with a fair amount of common sense and some guesswork.

Three "Y" shaped manifolds were cast in aluminium alloy with easy bends and each shaped to receive one "H6" type semi down-draught carburettor. In the interests of simplicity no heating was incorporated in the intake design, but all three carburettors were fitted with standard movable jets controlled from the dash. This scheme works very well when mixture enrichment is required, but is rarely needed, because of the high ambient temperature due to weather conditions for the greater part of the year.

At present the intakes are coupled by a  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. dia. balance pipe with a bleed off to the "Servo" brake operating system. Very little information seems available on the subject of balance pipes and in this area, as far as Lagonda Q is concerned, the size of the pipe fitted is pure guesswork.

Having successfully mounted the three carburettors on their new intakes, the problem of operating the throttles had to be dealt with. The conventional method of joining the shafts with

semi flexible couplings was not favoured, mainly because of lack of space; difficulty of getting good alignment and poor accessibility when making adjustments.

In view of these snags it was decided to provide a lay shaft mounted above the carburettors using plain brass bearings mounted on a M/S plate held by four of the carburettor fixing bolts.

The shaft is connected by lever/link motion directly to the throttle spindles below and each is individually adjustable by slacking the relevant lever on the lay shaft.

#### *ENLARGED INLET PORTS*

Whilst still on the search of more power, Ivan Forshaw came up with the suggestion that enlarged inlet ports might help, so with his kind assistance a spare head was obtained and handed over to the Nerus Engineering Co., of Rye for port enlargement from 1.515 in. to 1.700 in. as well as overall polishing. These people did a first-class job.

The combined results of fitting three carburettors, enlarging the inlet ports and lead polishing gave a definite improvement in power coupled with very smooth running.





### POWER STEERING

Although the Lagonda had excellent road holding and steering qualities when travelling at speed, steering was extremely heavy when parking or manoeuvring in limited space, it was also very sensitive to over lubrication.

The idea of converting to power steering was engendered after a trial run in the then new Jaguar XJ6 which had, at that time, just arrived in the Colony, the handling characteristics of this vehicle being excellent.

A first approach regarding this modification was made to Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd., as to the possibility of fitting the power steering system then current on the DB Astons, this suggestion was turned down politely, but flat.

In view of the excellence of the XJ6 steering it was decided to copy as far as possible its layout and use Jaguar parts if available. Fortunately the local agents were most co-operative and the necessary parts were readily obtained, these comprised the Hydraulic Pump, Steering Rack, Sundry Pipe Work and numerous bits and pieces.

On checking dimensions it was found that the Lagonda chassis mounting points for the steering were too wide for the XJ6 unit, so two extension pieces were machined out of solid bar, this was no problem.

Regarding the fitting of the pump unit, a mild steel carrier plate was prepared, this was held in position by extending four of the bolts on the front timing cover, with a further fixing point using the front engine mounting.

In order to obtain the necessary drive for the unit the existing single drive fan Pulley on the main shaft, was replaced by a double Pulley machined from the solid.

Brief road tests were carried out and the results were very pleasing, parking almost became a pleasure and everything seemed "superb" but! during the first journey in the rain all feeling in the steering almost disappeared and the effect was that of driving on ice.

### OVERSIZE TYRES

After a brief conference with the workshop technical staff and a general look around at similar sized cars it was noticed that all the modern power steered vehicles were fitted with fat tyres run at comparatively low pressure. The existing tyres on the Lagonda being only 6.00 x 16.

Following observations and discussions it was decided to fit oversize radial tyres and 185 x 16

Pirelli Cintura were selected as they were available from stock.

As the existing wheels were not wide enough for the new tyres it was necessary to obtain a wider section rim and the most suitable wheels for this purpose were located on a derelict Land Rover.

The rims from both the Land Rover and the Lagonda were cut out from their centres and the Rover rims were then welded to the Lagonda centres, great care was taken in this operation as regards alignment, body clearance and relationship between the wheel bearings and tyres.

With the larger tyres, the steering is excellent, comparatively light with good road feel.

### DISC BRAKES

As originally fitted the Lagonda Drum type brakes were not the best stoppers and tended to fade when the car was driven fast on the winding roads of the New Territories.

---

## PUB MEETS

*LONDON:* To be convened at new venue.

### *WEST HOME COUNTIES.*

Fox & Hounds,  
Englefield Green, Nr. Windsor.  
Second Wednesday each month.

### *WESTERN REGION:*

Half Moon Inn,  
Horsington, Nr. Wincanton, Somerset.  
Contact Patrons Witt and Barbara Wittridge for details.

### *MANCHESTER:*

Contact Herb Schofield for details.

### *MIDLANDS:*

Manor Hotel, Meriden.  
Second Tuesday each month.  
Gate Inn, Osgathorpe.  
Third Tuesday each month.

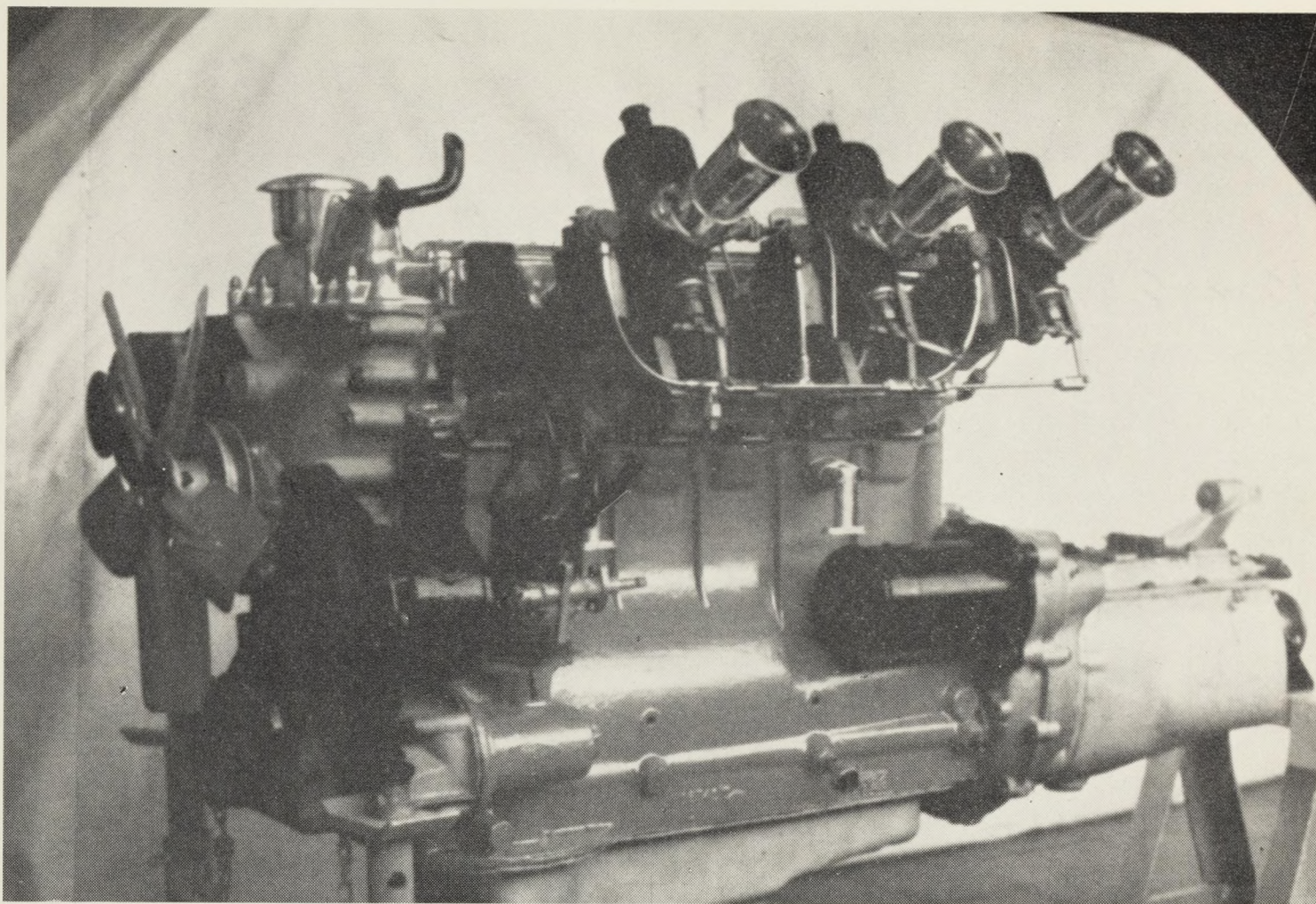
### *WEST SUSSEX:*

Sir Roger Tichborne,  
Loxwood, Nr. Billingshurst (B2133).  
Third Wednesday each month (M. Hallows).

### *EAST RIDING:*

Cave Castle Hotel,  
S. Cave, N. Humberside.  
First Wednesday each month (John S. Broadbank).





The carburettor conversion

For the conversion, Jaguar "S" type hubs, brake discs and calipers were used as they were suitable and available from local stock. New stub axles were machined using the "S" type as a pattern and the hubs were assembled.

Special mounting blocks were made as a base to fix the calipers to, these were bolted to the two rearmost holes of the four holes in the stub axle carriers to which the original brake back plate was bolted. The rear brakes, being inboard, were very straight forward with the calipers being bolted to specially made mounting blocks which were bolted to the differential casing, again using two of the original back plate mounting holes.

The original Lagonda wheel centres were used by fixing five wheel studs to a circular plate which in turn fixed to the Jaguar hub using the Jaguar wheel studs and nylox lock nuts.

At this stage the original master cylinder and Servo unit were connected up; the result was disappointing as insufficient hydraulic pressure could be obtained to operate the disc brake calipers satisfactorily. Following this a Girling Servo unit, from a Commer Bantam was fitted

and although the braking was improved, it was still not considered satisfactory.

After considerable thought it was decided to install a second pair of calipers in the front and also twin master cylinders, one for the two front and the two rear calipers, one for the two additional front calipers, and connected to the pedal push rod by means of a balance beam so that if one system failed the other would still operate. Two more caliper mounting blocks were made and fitted to the two foremost holes in the stub axle carriers to which the original back plates had been bolted. This time the original Servo unit was removed and a second Girling Servo unit fitted. One Servo connected to the front/rear circuit, one to the extra two front calipers. One was mounted under the offside wing behind the splash plate, and the other under the floor between the chassis members. The floor under the drivers seat was 'domed' slightly so as to obtain sufficient ground clearance.

Although the approach to this modification was not the purest of engineering, at least the results were excellent, there is now complete



control of the car, with a nice 'feel' on the brake pedal under all conditions.

#### ALTERNATOR

This was a simple replacement, with a minimum of wiring required, the alternator was fitted mainly to cope with the fairly heavy drain of the V.H.F. radio/phone with which the car was fitted.

#### MICRO IGNITION CONTROL

A simple device obtained from the U.S.A. for controlling the micro adjustment of the ignition from the dashboard and in effect over-riding the standard micro adjuster on the distributor. This can be quite useful for fine tuning.

#### ADDITIONAL SIGNAL LIGHTS

These were fitted as additional warning signals, mainly to catch the eye, particularly when driving nose to tail and with no time to even glance at existing gauges. The more important lights cover oil pressure, oil temperature and water temperature, however in addition to existing normal lights, there are indication for choke in use, handbrake on and hydraulic levels for brake and power steering reservoirs.

The need for additional warning was emphasised when a water hose to the air heater split and the gauge went unnoticed until things got really hot!

#### CONCLUSION

Apart from all the modifications, this car is unique in that it is the only Lagonda in the colony of Hong Kong and evokes much interest and speculation both when on the road or when stationary in car parks.

The owner is not sure that it was a good thing to put the "Q" sign on the rear of the car in that keen types are liable to concentrate on the sign rather than the road.

C. F. WOOD

*Club Member resident in Hong Kong for many years has driven this Lagonda since new.*

### CLUB ITEMS FOR SALE

For details, see inside  
back cover.

## Ted and Eleanor's Social An Unsolicited Testimonial

WHEN TED TOWNSLEY, GARAGE OWNER; FILM STAR; propriétaire-récoltant des grands vins supérieurs; Lagonda Club member; fruit grower and heaven knows what else, invites one to a social gathering, only the most serious difficulties prevent attendance.

Since his invitations also extend beyond our own Club we may also meet practitioners of other disciplines. And so it was on 25th September 1976.

We found ourselves celebrating upon the malfunctions of an obscure device on the exhaust-pressurised oil tank of a veteran Darracq, presided over by Heswell and Jack White (sentence by courtesy of W.B., *Motor Sport*). We were entertained most interestingly by two young founders of a new film company from Leeds. They showed us a five minute film based on Betjeman's poem "Indoor Games at Newbury" in which our Ted appeared (for 0.1 sec.) as uniformed chauffeur, and his LG.45 tourer (for 3½ mins.) as joint lead with a couple of juveniles.

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Ted and Eleanor Townsley

Our Club Chairman, H. Lees-Schofield, Esq., was graciously pleased to attend, accompanied by his Myrmidons from the Northern Lagonda Factory. His LG.45 Rapide was as original and immaculate as ever.

Although the bulk of Club members were from the Hull and Manchester areas, we were pleased to meet the new Members Ronnie and Evelyn Clayton from Bradford, with smaller Claytons and a really beautiful 16/80 tourer. Geoff Squires came from somewhere, but left about 5 p.m. in a fast modern grey job so as to get to Glasgow by nightfall. Bob Alexander flew over from Sheffield, fitting tightly into the cockpit of his Reliant Scimitar. Simon Martin arrived in his coveted chain-drive racing pedal car; fuel consumption seems to be about three apples/hour! Alan and Nancy Eidlaw arrived (and left) in a pillarless 3½-litre—the saloons are getting very rare.

Our Northern Secretary, Herb, was there—natch—cos Ted serves good ale. His Rapide had a smart Alan Brown designed “trouser” suspension unit. The great designer himself was also there, and promises even greater revelations at next year’s Northern Dinner. We were also happy to see the Raines again. We are pleased to report that they are both looking extremely well.

Interested to meet George Sands—pal of Don

Hoggard—I always thought that he/she was an Ms, but he was definitely Mr. I must read his literary output more carefully in future. Nice also to meet Club member Schofield. He had a curious Ford Popular engined replica Rapide. A little over-bodied perhaps (the car, not the owner, he’s slimmed a little), but at present petrol prices more suited to modern conditions.

The weather, after the previous day’s storms, was superb; Ted’s garden a bounty of fruit, and many of the ladies were drinking a really fine “port” wine of Ted’s. There were lots of photographers madly photographing each other photographing each other, and Jill Broadbent was brought by John’s latest acquisition; the spoutless model. Filler cap and exhaust systems still leak badly but I expect this will be rectified in a year or two.

Altogether it was a thoroughly happy end-of-season social occasion. Thank you very much indeed Eleanor and Ted. Please invite us all again soon.

JOROT

P.S.—I expect you will have an official and less scurilous report, but really! J. Molehusband Turner in his 1960 Vauxhall Victor !!!!!!!!!!!!! I can’t let him get away with it.







## Lagonda Days

ANOTHER IN OUR SEQUENCE OF PHOTOS OF THE factory at Staines. This one shows the body building shop but our guide Arthur Thatcher feels that for the photographer's benefit a proportion of the staff here were told to make themselves scarce on the day, as normally there were a great many more people engaged on the body building side. Mr. Hiram Harris the foreman, in background far left with black moustache, personally inspected every plank of wood the Department bought. Mr. Harris had been with Lagondas since the early days and was typical of the foremen at Staines who maintained exacting standards in all their work. Do any 'old Lags' remember the names of the men on the bench in the foreground?



### BOOK RECEIVED

**"Making of The Motor Car 1895-1930"** by Michael E. Ware. Published by Moorland Publishing Co., The Market Place, Hartington, Buxton, Derbyshire. Size: 9½ in. × 7¼ in. £4.20.

As the title implies this book describes in some detail how motor cars were made up to the end of the vintage era. Michael Ware is Curator of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and so has the splendid photographic library from which to draw his material. I was naturally very disappointed not to find any reference to Lagondas at Staines. "Lagonda Days" has been an interesting series of photos showing how Lagondas were made and the men who made them and I would have thought of some importance to motoring historians. That aside, I found the book greatly interesting with many well printed photographs. A very wide range of manufacturers is covered in the text and the whole book provided a fascinating insight into the means and methods of the successful and not so successful companies of this important period in the history of the motor car.

Hopefully if a revised edition is produced sometime in the future we may see included a section on the Staines factory, which in many ways was very typical of the motor manufacturers of the time.

A.W.M.

## Restoration of my DB 2.6

IT WAS NICE TO SEE IN A RECENT MAGAZINE THE restoration of a DB 2.6 as we do not seem to hear much about these cars. Here is a progress report on the restoration of mine up until present time.

I bought the car in 1972, it had been standing outside for just over a year, it was complete and seemed in quite good condition mechanically, although the interior was quite tatty. I towed it home, or should I say to what was then my home as we were living with a friend while we were modernizing our cottage. This was to be its home for about another year. Luckily we only had to tow it about a quarter of a mile as it had no brakes due to inoperative front wheel cylinders. On inspection we also found that the front offside stub axle had been partly removed and the ¾ in. B.S.F. nut that holds the wheel bearings on was only holding by about three threads. The outside wheel bearings which are a straight roller type had worn the inside of the hubs badly. As luck would have it my lathe was large enough to take the hubs, so I machined out the worn parts, turned down a piece of steam pipe, pressed and lock tightened it in the hub, machined that out to take the bearings, this proved very successful. Two new wheel cylinders were obtained (ex J type Morris van I believe) also new flexible brake pipes, and cylinder repair kits. The rear brakes were stripped as well, cleaned up and reassembled. All the linings were in good order so the whole lot was put back together.

The engine was siezed due to standing over a long period outside, this was freed off with the aid of Plusgas and a medium sized crowbar at the flywheel end. It soon freed. The plugs and points done, carbs and petrol pump cleaned out, warm water in the radiator it was soon running. The engine ran very well with extremely good oil pressure, but it wasn't long before it blew a hole in the exhaust system at the first elbow so I removed the lot and repaired it.

On road test the car performed very well apart from the outer off side rear wheel bearing which I found to be worn due to lack of lubrication.

It was then that I decided to completely rebuild the car, but we had not finished the house, but worse than that I had not even got a garage, so parts such as the dynamo, starter, radiator, carbs,



etc. were removed and the car covered up as best as possible.

I rebuilt all the odd parts in my spare time over the winter. Eventually the house was finished. I put up a workshop and garage, the car was re-instated and work began again.

All the wings and body parts were removed, the engine and gear box was taken out. I stripped the engine down and found it to be in fairly good condition. The bores and pistons were in good order so I had the bores honed and the crank journals polished up and fitted it with new rings and crank bearings. I decarbonized the cylinder head and re-seated the valves. Putting the valves back and getting the correct clearance I found to be a long job. The timing chains were in good condition, but I fitted a new distributor, drive chain, timing cover, oil seal and water pump parts. Incidentally I must say that Ivan Forshaw has been very helpful with spares, information and also provided the history of the car up until 1958, from the factory. Also as a matter of interest in 1958 it was fitted with a rebuilt engine by Lagonda's. I enclose a photograph of the finished engine.

The box section of the body under the doors was very rotten so I replaced this completely. This is a very awkward job as the only way to do it is to remove the aluminium panels from the windscreen to half way up the rear wheel arch. When removed the ash frame work also was badly rotted. The woodwork was removed and kept (what was left of it) for patterns. I made up new box sections and welded them into place. I also thought it would be a good idea to leave out the large holes Lagonda's saw fit to leave on the inside, these I made smaller and fitted with rubber grommets.

Once all this was done and the body made stronger it was removed from the chassis. When removed the rear body mountings were found to have sagged badly, these were repaired by putting a piece of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. plate across the back of them, bolted in position and the mountings welded to

the plate. The underneath was then cleaned down, treated for rust, given three coats of red oxide and two coats of aluminium paint. (I enclose a photograph of the underside of the body, looking at it from the rear, also a photograph of the side with panels removed and new box section in place.)

I then steam cleaned the chassis and shot blasted it, stripping out all the steering and suspension, repairing all parts and fitting new rubber gaiters where necessary. It was then reassembled and given four coats of chassis black.

The body is now refitted to the chassis and I am in the process of fitting the new ash frame work, which was kindly cut out for me by an ex-member of the Lagonda Club whom some of you will probably know, Dan Hagen who used to have a 2-litre team car of 1929 vintage, I believe. The next job is the gear box which I hope to convert to floor change making up my own conversion. I should also like to fit it with a servo. (Has anyone done this as I would be very glad of some information.)

Well that is as far as I have got up to the present time. It has taken me over four years working on it at odd times (you know how it is) to get this far so perhaps in another four years it will be finished and I can write reams more to bore you. If anybody else is doing this to a DB 2.6 I would be glad to hear from you, or if you think I can help you in any way do not hesitate to write to me.

R. H. E. Mack, "Acacia", Queen Street, Spooner Row, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9JU.

## ***Me and my cars!***

QUITE WHY, WHEN NEARLY 60, DID I SUDDENLY become infected with an absorbing interest in vintage cars? The solution, like that to many problems, may be found in youthful activities at an impressionable age.

It all seems to have started when it was realized that the family hack, a 1928 Austin "Chummy" was being monopolized by me and I might as well, therefore, look on it as my own.

Plans were worked out for what would now be known as a conversion. At the time, the head of the house voiced criticisms which were countered by reminding him that, in his youth, he'd rebuilt "P and M" motor-cycles and sailed a canoe on the Clyde which was lunacy if ever I heard it.

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One of my local friends was Bill Scriven who was in the racing shop at Austins, and through him I met Alf Depper, the foreman. As Alf was a patient of my father's all seemed set for a useful friendship.

Alf listened to my scheme for converting the "Chummy" to an "Ulster", muttered something which sounded like "Gorblimey" and led me into a dark corner of the works. Here he showed me a used but undamaged Ulster body which he let me have for 15 shillings! He looked around and added a "dropped" front axle, a set of flat springs and an outside exhaust system. I think the whole lot came to £3 and as I was able to sell the old body—I always suspected that the buyer had stolen a chassis from the works!—I couldn't really grumble.

A happy session then followed while the reconstruction took place. Funds would not run to an "Ulster" engine so I had to make do with a Watmough cylinder head; any difference this made to performance existed entirely in the imagination.

The finished apparatus looked a dashing affair and a considerable mileage was done in the next few years in going to Brooklands. What wonderful days those were! If you've never been to the "Track" you don't know what motor racing is!

Brooklands membership entitled one to use the track when a race or record attempt wasn't on. This alone was worth the subscription! The youthful thrills of clawing one's way up the banking to try and go above the fifty-foot line and then screaming down the Railway Straight at all of 65 m.p.h. remain with me still!

And the peace of the place! On a weekday summer afternoon it was completely quiet except for the occasional Moth, perhaps a car being tested and always—believe it or not—the larks! On race days the members had access to all the best places such as the Club House, Paddock and Aerodrome and the public were kept well segregated in a way which, nowadays, wouldn't be tolerated for a moment. But those were the Happy Days; the "Right Crowd and No Crowding" meant something!

I had a cousin who, having become a doctor, decided to work as Sales Manager at the Aero Club. There seemed to be no reason for this except that he was rich. He introduced me one day to George Lowdell, the Chief Instructor, who, as he was getting into his Moth, asked if I'd like to go with him.

Only when it was too late did I discover that he was going to do aerobatics over the crowd while the Birkin-Cobb Match Race was on. At no time, for some 20 minutes, was George flying straight and level; the memory of one vertical climb after another, stalling off the top with full engine and then pulling out at ground level is one of my more awful recollections!

Eventually the "Dick-Ulster" had to go because of ear trouble caused by the use of no more than aero screen in all weathers. Like the memory of the Lowdell aerobatics it is with me still but it was, I suppose, worth it!

I now had an Austin Ten saloon which wasn't what I'd been used to. But things looked up when Bill Scriven told me that Austins were running a team of blown Sevens—the "Grasshoppers"—in long distance trials and would I like to come on the next London-Land's End with him? With thoughts that if I did I might be looked upon as a likely lad for a drive in one of the single seaters, I couldn't wait.

I went on several trials with Bill, all very good fun, but not productive of the hoped for invitation. Only more ear trouble.

The final episode in my Grasshopper saga was a J.C.C. trial in Derbyshire. We were about to climb Jenkyn's Chapel which started with a steep, sharp and narrow right hander. Bill, thinking it was all too easy, went into it flat out in first but overlooked the fact that the "road" consisted of rocks and stones. Not surprisingly, the car slid outwards and up the sloping hillside and then gently rolled over on top of us.

There seemed to be a long, long pause, punctuated by bucolic oaths as someone put his hand on the exhaust pipe and the car was righted. The annoying thing was that I got no attention at all because Bill was bleeding and I wasn't! Eventually I drove the wreck home—the steering was most peculiar—and helped Bill into the surgery.

Parental ultimations were delivered about "this car nonsense" and that was that. There then came an interlude of some 33 years occupied by a Standard 10, a Prefect and a succession of Jaguars—by great good fortune, Company ones—followed by my serious relapse into car rebuilding. This time an M.45R. The fact that it had occurred so late in life can only mean one thing—second childhood!

ALASTAIR INNES DICK



# The 1976 Border Rally

THIS YEAR WE MOVED THE BORDER RALLY BACK to the Tyne Valley to the area held as the outpost of the Empire by the Romans.

As usual we were very lucky with the weather. The sun shone all afternoon and I think that the eight entries enjoyed the new venue. Everybody was surprised by the amount of wild open land within a few miles of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The start and finish of the rally was at Axwell Paul School. At 2 p.m. all the drivers were given a long list of numbers to break down into spot heights and map references from which they had to work out their route.

Once on the road the drivers had 18 interesting questions to answer and at one point were stopped by the school lads who asked the drivers for interesting irrelevant motoring information.

When everybody arrived back at the school we all moved through to the library where the school had laid on an excellent buffet banquet.

I believe everybody enjoyed the meal and were pleased to be able to move around and talk to all the other members at the same time.

The school lads did a grand job moving between the competitors and their friends keeping their glasses and plates topped up.

I hope that next year we will have a few more entries, after all it is only a two-and-a-half hour run from Leeds.

The eventual winner was C. Boylan, 16/80; 2nd T. Adams, Alvis; 3rd H. Schofield, V.12; 4th J. Ryder, Scimitar; 5th J. Piper, 2-litre; 6th A. Didsbury, 2-litre; 7th I. Macdonald, Morgan; 7th H. Goulding, 2-litre.

JULIAN REISNER

Congratulations to Helen and Bob Crane who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in August. All good wishes from the Club.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Forward Facing Back Axle Spouts Or How to Seize up a 2-litre Back Axle without even trying

Dear Sir,

OTHER OWNERS OF 2-LITRES WITH BACK AXLES whose filler is bolted onto the front casing may wish to avoid my recent destructive experience.

The theory is that you pour oil into the banjo housing until the filler spout shows the level to be correct. Over-filling can assist in lubricating the brake linings, but under-filling can prevent the oil reaching the differential cage when at rest (it is deterred from entering in motion by centrifugal things).

The snag is that the filler spout is an unreliable guide, and may even speak with a forked tongue. Beware the following:

the spout can look at least part-full when the axle is dry as it seems to run uphill to the banjo the spout can look full (particularly with a viscous oil) if the breather is blocked during the pour

the spout itself holds about half-a-pint, and is a very coarse indicator of the overall level across the axle unit

the angle of the car will disproportionately influence the appearance of the level at the spout.

Probably the most reliable test of the oil level in these conditions is to drain and refill (with the old oil if you are resource-conscious), using measured amounts as a guide to the level. Several experiments with the car at different angles suggest to me that the right quantity is between 1 and 1½ pints. (Any more accurate information here would be welcome.)

Don't, whatever you do, make my mistake and let dire warnings about over-filling mislead you into giving the spout-reading the benefit of the doubt, especially if the axle just drips occasionally. It is heart-breaking to have to extract a unit which appears to be in as-new condition, with the exception of a seized differential and a chipped pinion.

JEFF ODY  
London, N.1.





### The Border Rally

Dear Sir—One of the best parts of any Club meeting is seeing Lagonda members and their friends. Members tend to resemble their cars—easy on the eye, interesting and making the right sort of noises. Conversely, others sometimes make noises that are more rude than their cars!

It is a fact that it is “people” who make a Club successful rather than their cars. I am now entering my twentieth year in the Club and there are a fair number of members who I enjoy meeting but as yet I have not seen their cars at a Club event.

When the normal democratic processes of the Club produced JULIAN REISNER as the new Border Secretary (I wonder what sort of blackmail our Chairman applied to obtain such a ready candidate?) it meant that we would see more of his pupils from Axwell Park School. Different lads over the past few years have attended various Club and VSCC events with Julian and helped out as marshalls.

In particular their efforts at the Northern Driving Tests have been appreciated by the writer by relieving him of all official duties and so easing his conscience in awarding himself 1st, 2nd or 3rd places during the last three years.

The first job to come Julian's way was the annual Border Rally which has become a nice formula of good weather, fine scenery, plenty of socialising with interesting and mildly competitive motoring thanks to the previous Border Secretary Iain Macdonald.

This year the event started and finished in the grounds of the school with the proceedings controlled very efficiently by the Staff and the Boys.

Had our Chairman taken time to brush up his knowledge of the local dialect instead of eyeing the local birds he might have done better at answering the questions.

The Rally itself was of a teasing nature, questions set by Mrs. Reisner who inconsiderately did not put the answers alongside. The route was through pleasant country with all the time in the world. At one point we stopped to take liquid refreshment not realising we were standing right next to one of the clues for about 15 minutes before going on. We never did get that one!

After the Rally the Staff and Boys surpassed themselves with the preparation and serving of a magnificent cold buffet with alcoholic refreshment. The hospitality was such that I could never remember my glass being empty!

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That the evening was a good one is clear from the fact that this member who is well known for his *bonhomie* at the morning after the night before, stayed in that state until one o'clock on Sunday and two pints at the Kings Arms.

The whole affair was extremely enjoyable and deserves better support for all the effort that was put into it by the organisers and helpers. So make a date to join us next year.

ALAN BROWN  
Hyde, Cheshire.

#### A Shareholder's View

Dear Sir—I am not quite sure what a well written technical letter about the beer brewing process has to do with the Lagonda Club. However as the subject has been raised it is perhaps worth mentioning that our President, also the Chairman, and I suspect a few hundred members of our Club are in fact members of the CAMRA organisation (Campaign for Real Ale). It also occurs to me that perhaps the rest are not the slightest bit interested in beer, being either wine or spirit drinkers, or in the case of one of my members from the Hull area—actually TEETOTAL!

I will simply confine myself to saying that I

find the Frajbis argument unacceptable—like the beer his overlarge company produces!

HERB SCHOFIELD

Oldham Brewery Shareholder

#### The Club A.G.M.

Dear Sirs—We very much appreciated your invitation to attend the Lagonda Club A.G.M., September 1976.

My wife really loved the Lagonda cars, and was quite in sympathy with the gentleman who when asked, what did it take to obtain such a result with his 2-litre replied, "Two years and a very understanding wife". Or words to that effect.

We saw one lady giving their car a final dust round with her hankie—what devotion and keenness.

Always there is such an atmosphere of enthusiasm at your get togethers that makes all the hard work you, the Committee and helpers put into arranging these happenings all so worthwhile.

I must tell you this, when we first arrived in the grounds of Burnham Beeches Hotel and had parked and were looking around, still in our seats, at what was going on, we looked towards the gate and what did we see but a fox—yes a fox, he walked slowly across the drive, looking this way and that and then disappeared into bushes. Whether he had come to see the cars or just for the food we can only guess.

For me anyway, the only sad note is that with every passing year there are less and less ex-Lags to meet. But then I suppose that's life!

Thank you for Club Magazines which are always of interest.

Wishing the Club well from my wife and myself.

Yours sincerely,  
S. NEW  
(ex-Lagonda Company)

**Articles and Photos  
are needed for the  
Spring Magazine please.  
Copy date:  
15th February.**



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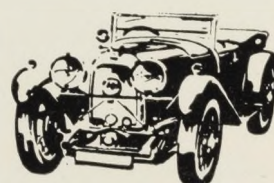
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