



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 97 Winter 1977



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MAGAZINE

Issue No. 97

Winter 1977

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

Editor: A. W. MAY

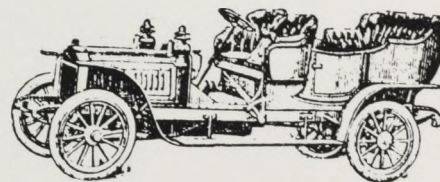
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Contributions do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee nor of the Editor, and expressed opinions are personal to contributors.

FRONT COVER: A very fine 1926 14/60 2-litre semi-sports tourer owned by member Paul Loxton Edwards. (See under "Letters to Editor".)

Out and About

I am very grateful for members' response to my plea for magazine copy. Nearly all of the contributions have been used however, so can I ask for a further effort for the Spring issue? Closing date for copy is 1st February. Many thanks!

★ ★ ★ ★

The happy couple shown on page 5 are BERYL and ROGER FIRTH who were married in the Autumn. Our many congratulations to them both. As Roger pointed out Herb Schofield's Rapide has had to take second best in the photo!

★ ★ ★ ★

The manuscript for the long awaited Lagonda book is complete and discussions are taking place with the publisher. It seems we have written an unusually long book—about double the length of most motoring histories! There is no doubt that it will be a most comprehensive history of the *marque* and a must for every members' bookshelf. It is hoped that in conjunction with the MIKE WILBY FUND the Club will be able to purchase a quantity of books to pass on to Club members at a discounted price. Your Committee are to discuss this scheme at their December meeting and more news of our plans will reach you in a Newsletter in due course.

★ ★ ★ ★

ESMOND JOHNSON TAYLOR has died suddenly at the age of 71. Known in the Club for his ownership of a very fine M.45 and an LG.45, cars that both he and his wife drove regularly, he was in his professional life an outstanding portrait photographer. His career spanned 50 years until his retirement from his Norwich studio three years ago. He was a member of the Institute of British Photographers. Mr. Taylor will be sadly missed by Club members and in particular those in the Norfolk area where he lived and worked. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife and son. Happily both his cars remain in the Club with new ownership.

★ ★ ★ ★

**A Happy & Successful
New Year
to all Club members
and their families**

Club Spares

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF POLICY BY THE Committee is in direct response to the lengthy discussion that took place at this year's Annual General Meeting. It was felt that the minute of the Committee discussion covers all the essential points together with comments from the Club officials directly concerned.

COMMITTEE MEETING 3rd OCTOBER, 1978 Spares

The question of spares and spares liaison was fully discussed, including all points raised by members at the A.G.M., together with letters received since. The Committee considered that it would not be possible at the present time to organise a comprehensive new spares service by imposing, for example, a levy on members to provide the necessary funds.

However, it was proposed and agreed that the spares service at present organised by Brian Horwood mainly for the 2 litre, 3 litre and 3½ litre should be extended to cover other models, this would hopefully encourage exchange of information, advice, movement of used spares, and the manufacture of new spares on a group basis.

The Spares Liaison service will now be as follows:

Brian Horwood will continue and develop his service for the 'vintage' Lagondas.

Alan Brown is to organise a service for the 4½ litre and V.12

Brian Dearden-Briggs is co-opted on to the Committee to look after the interests of the David Brown cars.

The Committee requested that this minute should appear in full in the next available issue of the magazine, and that the three names above together with their addresses and telephone numbers should appear in a prominent position in every future issue.

THE DAVID BROWN ASTON MARTIN LAGONDAS AND ME!

Having been co-opted to the Committee ostensibly to provide a liaison service for spares for these cars, I am to some extent flying false colours! In fact, there probably is no spares problem since the works are still interested in the current and last two models and there is a very good specialist service available for the 2.6 and 3 litres.

However, I do feel that I am required to drum-

Beryl and Roger Firth at their wedding.



up enthusiasm for these cars in the Lagonda Club. Owners, and prospective owners, are not likely to swell the membership list to any great extent, but it seems wrong that true successors to the great Lagondas of the twenties and thirties and bearing the marque badge, should be held in such little regard by the Club. I will do my bit to remedy this.

In addition, I will be pleased to give help, advice and general chat to owners of these cars.

BRIAN DEARDEN-BRIGGS

Balderstone Hall,
Mirfield,
Yorkshire.

Tel: Mirfield 496276.

SPARES, SPARES, SPARES

A message from your Liaison Officer for 4½ litre cars, Sixes and V.12's.

WHAT! I hear you cry loudly are you going to do for us.

Equally loudly, I hear Alan Brown cry from the depths of:

Matley Moor Cottage,
Matley Lane,
Hyde,
Cheshire SK14 4EG

Tel: (061) 338 2766 or some nights
(061) 624 6236 (Northern
Lagonda Factory)

NOTHING, or almost nothing, my object is to make you help yourselves and other members at the same time.

I would like to hear from you if you are:

(1) Having a part made for your car no matter how big or small so that I may circulate other members to see if they have need of the same part.

(2) If you find a modern equivalent to fit, even if it requires modification (full details of modification if at all possible).

(3) If you require any spares, I may not be able to help but it is useful in building up information on what spares are required.

(4) Any technical information, articles or descriptions of work you have carried out yourself.

(5) Any method of effecting repairs, or

renovations to worn parts, novel or otherwise.

(6) If you have any spares to get rid of.

In return I will pass this information on and try to put people in touch with one another in order that they help each other.

Although the Club's policy is not to have spares made we may put some into stock in the same way as we have done for the 2 litre cars.

As I start I am considering having pistons made for both the six and twelve cylinder models. The price range will be in the £16.00 to £20.00 each region and I hope to produce them at STANDARD and OVERSIZE. Anyone interested please contact me. NO MONEY PLEASE UNTIL REQUESTED.

Also for the six cylinder cars, rocker shafts, as it is these that appear to wear rather than the rockers. The price for each shaft about £7.00, again contact me but NO MONEY PLEASE.

If there is sufficient interest in the above I will confirm the price and contact all concerned.

ALAN BROWN

* * * *

Lagonda Club 1977 Awards

MAIN AWARDS — 1977

Michael Trophy J. W. T. Crocker
Fox Trophy A. W. Baker
Northern Trophy N. Hall
Densham Trophy R. Colquhoun
Allison Trophy
Bentley Trophy J. W. T. Crocker
Raine Trophy C. Boylan
Car Club Trophy
Committee Trophy J. A. E. Elder
The Gostling Prize J. Ody

EVENT RESULTS — 1977

RALLY TOUR

1st Alec Downie Pint Tankard
2nd=Peter Whenman
Joe Harding ½ Pint Tankard

BORDER RALLY

1st C. Boylan Pint Tankard
2nd B. Naylor ½ Pint Tankard

NORTHERN GYMKHANA

Pre-War

1st R. Paterson Pint Tankard
2nd A. Brown ½ Pint Tankard
3rd D. R. Hill ½ Pint Tankard

Post-War

1st Dr. J. G. Rider ½ Pint Tankard

LAGONDA RACE/B.D.C.

1st J. W. T. Crocker Bentley Trophy
2nd A. H. Wittridge Pint Tankard
3rd N. Hall ½ Pint Tankard

CONCOURS

Premier M. Valentine—V.12

Class A 1st R. Hewitt—3 litre

2nd C. Banks/P. Whenman—2 litre LC.

Award of Merit G. Seaton—3 litre

Class B 1st= H. Schofield and D. Hine LG.45R

R. Stähli M.45 Tourer

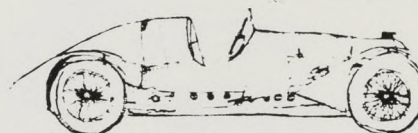
Class C 1st J. Lancaster DB.3 litre

Pint Tankard for Premier and First.

½ Pint Tankard for Second and Award of Merit.

★ ★ ★ ★

The Awards will be presented at the Northern Dinner on Friday 7th April. Will winners make a special effort to attend please.



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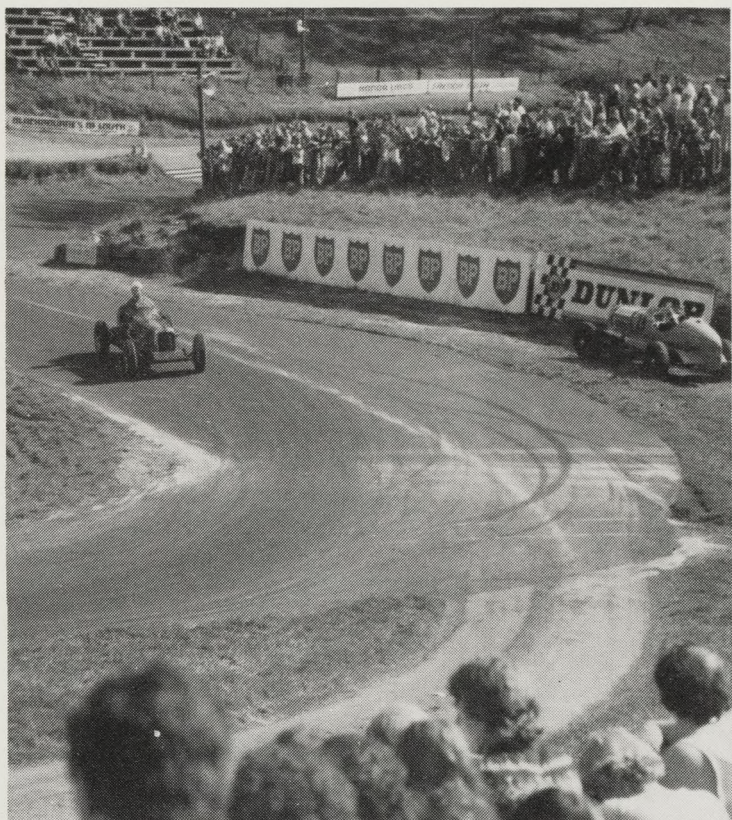
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Jon Abson passing car vacated by P. J. Morgan.



David Fletcher-Jones smokes on a different line.

LAGONDAS at the SECOND CADWELL

THANKS AGAIN TO PETER HULL, THIS REPORTER IS now able to offer a few notes on V.S.C.C. Cadwell of 1977, together with regrets that he was unable to produce the written homework as quickly as Tony Wood was able to produce the long-focus shot depicted in the last magazine.

Race 1—A scratch race and Brian Naylor must have felt a bit lonely on the grid with no other Lagonda to keep him company in his first-ever race at Cadwell.

Race 4—Allcomers' Scratch Race—Amongst the entry for this twelve-lapper were five supercharged E.R.A. models, two s/c Maseratis, and a number of similarly potent specials. And our Unholy Trinity were at it again, on this occasion augmented to a quartet by P. J. Morgan with blower obligato, (wind section?). He was unlucky and spun off at the top of The Mountain on his first lap. Jon (yes I do know how to spell it) finished 4th and James was 6th, both very creditable performances, but when David came in from two places behind James, many of us wondered whether we should see the red Rapier again as it had been smoking rather badly.

Race 6—The Spero Trophy Race, with scratch start and over eight laps—The red Rapier of Fletcher-Jones most emphatically appeared again. On lap one he was first up The Mountain, with Seath's polished aluminium Rapier seventh, and Naylor's cream Rapier fifteenth. David was first again on lap two, and this year he had the edge on Farquhar (last year's winner) all the way. Yet again David demonstrated his liking for the infield at the top of The Mountain and he was somewhat pressed at times, but he finished first and got fastest lap at an even higher speed than the winner of last year's epic.

Race 8—A handicap race—As scratch races tend to be, event six had been processional at times, but not so this one. The Nickalls Rapier was there, having been well and truly repaired since July Silverstone, and Peter was at the wheel. His positions were 9th, 7th, 6th, and 5th as the race progressed, so he must have had an enjoyable time with a good deal of overtaking, because although he was passed by faster cars from behind making up for their handicap, he continued to improve his own position. One of the three which did pass him was the first of the 4½ litre Lagondas entered, Alastair Barker in the V.12 on his Cadwell debut. He was really on form, his positions being 15th, 11th, 8th, 3rd, and even 2nd, which represents a lot

of very hard work. Nobody succeeded in passing him. Unfortunately a driver who remains anonymous for the purposes of this report tried to emulate Fletcher-Jones and cut off a slice of the same infield, and on his gaining the tarmac again Barker had to take hasty evasive action. Although there was no physical contact to be seen the on-form V.12 came to rest some yards further on at Hall's Bends (nothing to do with our Nigel) with a suspected locked brake.

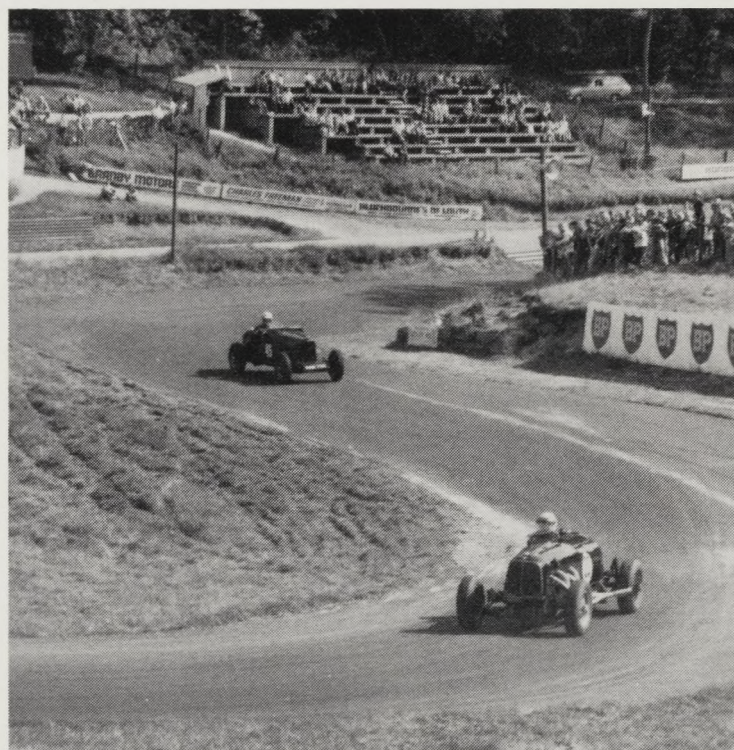
Race 9—Nigel Hall brought out his LG.45 for this scratch event, and was against the Rapiers of Crocker and Nickalls, the latter with Margaid driving. It was a delight to see her having a go, undeterred by that contretemps at Silverstone in July. Nigel was unable to repeat the success of his earlier Cadwell meeting and circulated steadily in 8th place until the car two places ahead of him gave up and he improved to 7th, where he finished. However, J. W. T. Crocker did manage to do better than Nigel this year, and his positions were 5th, 4th, 3rd, and he finished 2nd.

It was appropriate that he'd had a very good day, he's the new President of the V.S.C.C.! Congratulations!

Altogether it had been an interesting day's

racing under marvellous weather conditions—and the Cadwell meeting for 1978 is fixed for Sunday, 27th August.

ROY PATERSON



James Crocker chases Bianchi in a 3½-lt. Alvis Special.



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PROST, WICKULER PILS!

EARLY IN THE YEAR DICK HUXLEY, MY NAVIGATOR and co-driver on many events in the past, suggested that it was about time we did another continental rally, the last one having been the Lagonda-Mumms champagne event to Rheims in 1973. The choice of event was suddenly decided for us one morning by a letter appearing on my doormat from the *Allgemeiner Schnauferl Club* announcing that the entry fees for all British competitors in their 1977 rally would be paid for by their sponsors, the Wickuler Brewery. What could be better?

Consequently, Monday, 16th May, found us embarked on the good ship 'Chartres' en-route from Folkestone to Boulogne, with the pleasures of the continent ahead of us. Fortunately for the writer's well-known affliction of mal-de-mer the sea was like the proverbial mill pond.

Two days were spent visiting the battle fields of the Somme and the Great War trenches preserved on Vimy ridge, before heading into Germany to the scene of the rally, Bergische Land. This is the area between the Rhine and Ruhr, and although only a short distance from the heavy industrial areas, it is a country of old townships and villages with their timber framed houses and slate façades. There are the quiet valleys, broad meadows, gentle hills, rich game woods and of course, the great dams which contain the huge lakes, now very peacefully used for sailing and watersport. But names such as the Moehne, Eder and Sorpe bring back memories of

the exploits of the dam busters squadron. These enormous dams are of course all long since repaired, and only by close examination can one make out the evidence of the damage wrought by the Barnes Wallis bouncing bombs.

We had to sign on for the rally in Dusseldorf on the Thursday afternoon, and after collecting documents and meeting old friends, the cars were safely locked away in an underground garage for the night. The final instructions were in German but with an English translation thoughtfully provided. The instruction, "Stick your name tag on a suitable part of your body and wear them during the whole rally", conjured up all manner of interesting possibilities. However, these name tags certainly helped to get to know people, and the evening event, a three hour cruise on the Rhine in the 'Stadt Dusseldorf' with a meal, beer, wine and music was a jovial affair.

Friday dawned dull and damp, although the rain just about stopped for the actual start of the first stage at 0830. Finally it was our turn to roll up to the line, but—panic!—when we were given a sheaf of papers headed "*Durchfuhrungsbestimmungen*", a word certainly not to be found in my battered pocket dictionary. However, closer investigation revealed a translation amongst the papers. Navigation was generally by what I have always known as a Tulip rally card, but apparently known in Germany as Chinese signs, and various treasure hunt questions and general motoring knowledge questions had to be answered. Some were

exceedingly curious, like, "Where did the first automobiles have their braces?"

We decided that instructions like the following were best ignored. "Total winner resp. class winner will be the participant with the lowest number of minus-points. In case of parity, first the better results in answering the questions, then the shorter time needed, at least the weaker performance weight will be decisive." We just pressed on regardless, especially to reach the controls where, "any excess of the ideal time at this checkpoint will inflict a punishment". Arriving late at the tail end of a long queue of cars waiting to check in at such a time control, we drove straight past rather than risk possible medieval teutonic torture.

One interesting control was at the Villa Hugel, owned by the Krupp family, and which contains a museum of industrial archaeology. Another checkpoint was at the railway museum at Dahlhausen and the rally schedule allowed

sufficient time to look round these places.

Lunch was provided at the Aral petrol research centre, Aral being another of the rally sponsors. The Aral trio even provided music for dancing and Reg Long took time off from driving his superb 1914 Prince Henry Vauxhall to show how it should be done. After a quick look around the research centre, and free replenishment of our tank from the Aral historic petrol pump, the afternoon section continued. We eventually reached the final control, only to become apprehensive when we discovered it was located at the High Court of Wuppertal. Perhaps that item about infliction of punishment would really be true? And we had missed one control completely!

However, we were not detained, and were even piloted through the town at high speed through all the red lights to the multi-storey parkhaus for the night stop. The programme promised a pleasant evening with hearty snack at the Wickuler



Alan and Dick adopt a suitably phlegmatic pose at the start.



Foot down and eyes down.

Photos: H. Boris Kerber.

Brewery, and indeed, this was so, with the Wickuler trademark represented by the three musketeers in person, complete with foaming steins of beer.

Saturday dawned even duller and damper than Friday—it just poured. I seem to create a jinx on any rally I attend, it always rains. After waiting around in the wet for ages the organisers finally announced that the morning section had been cancelled due to the weather, and we should drive straight to the lunch stop. Rumour had it that the real reason for the cancellation was that the box of route cards had been put in the boot of a marshal's car without telling him, and he had then driven off, it was known not where.

Of course the consequence of all this was that all competitors arrived at the lunch stop, the Hotel zur Post at Altenberg within a space of fifteen minutes instead of being dispersed over two hours. I have never seen *frauleins* moving quite so fast as they dashed back and forth with laden trays trying to satisfy the impatient customers. However it did give us time to visit the magnificent Cistercian Cathedral of Altenberg.

By now the weather had cleared and we were able to lower the hood and at the same time repair the only fault which had occurred during the rally—the navigator's seat had collapsed under the

strain. The organisers had produced route cards for the afternoon section which was a complicated mixture of map reading, Chinese signs and map overlays, and the stage finished with a traditional Bergische Kaffeetafel—afternoon coffee and cream cakes, definitely not for weight watchers.

The Schnaufferl Ball in the evening was a grand affair held at the zoo. After all the mistakes we had made during the rally, we were astounded to find ourselves being awarded third in class, best foreign competitor and a prize for having driven the longest distance to the event.

However, the rally was not quite over yet, and all cars formed up on parade at the German Army Colmar barracks for a Sunday morning review. Tanks, guns and military vehicles were also on display, whilst the competitors indulged in a so called "hangover breakfast", very aptly named. And, now the event was over, the sun shone! The programme stated "1200 Uhr, Discharge of members", and this seemed very appropriate, being as we were on army property.

The long haul home was trouble free and altogether this was a most enjoyable event with all credit due to the organisers and thanks to the sponsors. We look forward to next year.

ALAN ELLIOTT

How to Become a Lagonda Enthusiast Without Really Trying

DURING MY FIFTY YEARS IN THE MOTOR TRADE, forty of them in running my own business, I had many opportunities of owning and enjoying a number of what are often described today as "desirable" motor cars. However, when I decided to retire, in 1964, my stock consisted solely of modern cars and my personal transport, a 1962 Morris Oxford.

In anticipation of my forthcoming retirement, we had built a bungalow on the "back land" behind the garage and I had, quite mistakenly, taken in a large portion of the field. By 1968, we had been able to turn this into something like a garden and my thoughts turned to the desirability of once more owning a "real" motor car, instead of just watching other people enjoying theirs.

The adverts in the motoring press did not seem to present anything really interesting, so an advertisement was inserted in the V.S.C.C. Newsletter. The response to this included a variety of possibilities, ranging from a Talbot 75 in bits to a Bentley 4½ "as new". I had also heard of a 1928 Star 18/50 at Wilmslow in Cheshire, a Lancia in Bath and another Lancia in Brandon, Suffolk. Another interesting offer was a Talbot 105 in Sheffield and I had answered an advert for a 2 litre Lagonda in Harlow.

Then commenced a series of very enjoyable trips with Blanche, my wife, who although hoping that we should soon find something suitable, was sorry when we did as this meant the end of our outings. We saw the Star, both Lancias and the Talbot 105, but none of these seemed to be exactly what we were looking for. On the way home from Brandon we stopped for a picnic lunch, and realised that Harlow was not too far away, so decided to go on and have a look at the 2 litre.

We had some difficulty in locating the address in Harlow, due to the fact that it was a new block of flats and none of the people we asked had even heard of it. We eventually found it, but there was no answer to our ring at No. 115. A neighbour informed us that the occupier was a school teacher and would not be home for some time. We decided not to wait but dropped a note through the letter box, requesting the owner to telephone me if the car was still unsold. When we returned to street level, we noticed that under the flats was a range of

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lock-up garages with numbers corresponding to those of the flats above. To our surprise, we found No. 115 open and the Lagonda available for inspection at our leisure. Although it appeared to be in need of some restoration work, at least it was just the type of car we had been looking for, so now to await the expected telephone call. We had not long to wait, as the phone rang almost as soon as we arrived home. It was agreed that I should go over to Harlow again the next morning and, being Saturday, my son Robert was available as second driver in the event of a satisfactory deal.

A short test drive revealed a number of faults, but as I was prepared for a certain amount of work on any car I bought, provided it was otherwise satisfactory, we came to an agreed price, which included a quantity of spares.

As we had a journey of over seventy miles to reach home, we were prepared for one or two "involuntary" stoppages, but the first one came sooner than we expected. Starting off after crossing a main road not more than five miles from Harlow, I changed from first gear to second, when we came to a sudden halt with the engine stalled and the rear wheels locked. We were in two gears at once and no amount of coaxing with the gear lever produced neutral. There was nothing for it but to remove the front seats and the floorboards, then the top of the gearbox. We were just persuading the gears to return to their neutral positions, when who should turn up but the late owner. He could see that by then we had the matter in hand so with best wishes for a pleasant journey, he continued on his way. We had no further stoppages but the steering box was on the point of seizing up, or so it seemed, with the effect that no reaction could be felt from the road wheels and keeping to a straight course was more a matter of luck than judgement. However we eventually reached home safely with nothing worse than a pair of aching arms.

Oddly enough, during all my years in the trade, Lagonda was one of the few marques with which I

had had little experience, the only model we ever had in for servicing was an 11 h.p. coupé and that must be over fifty years ago. Of course I knew that James Woollard had had many years of faithful service from his 2 litre.

However, TF 23 and I soon became acquainted, even familiar, by the time I had seen the inside of the engine, the gearbox and the rear axle. Having sorted out our little differences, we embarked on a very pleasant nine years, so far, of vintage motoring together. Long may it continue.

I certainly never regretted the fact that it was a Lagonda that came my way by sheer chance, and last, but definitely not least, membership of the Lagonda Club has been the means of meeting many genuine and helpful new friends.

PHIL KINGSTON (K.24)

Hull & East Riding Members' Notes

LONG SERVING MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE CLUB will be delighted to hear that Henry Coates, though regrettably not active in competition, continues to keep comparatively well, in good spirits, and working almost as hard as ever. They will also, one feels, be looking forward to his next article for the magazine.

Don Hoggard keeps unearthing and legally acquiring derelict Lagondas, whilst John Broadbank sells his far from derelict 4½. Meanwhile the latter also organises our magnificent local Christmas repast.

A special event in this part of the country was the V.S.C.C. Autumn Social. This has been organised elsewhere for the past few years by Bridget Laycock, and since she and Rob have for some time become welcome and regular visitors—through the Hoggard connection—to our local pub meet (Cave Castle, first Wednesdays) she thought that the Hull area would be a change of scenery. First she fixed the date and then John Beardow, Ian and Mary North, and Don Hoggard helped out with local details. John led the Dockland visit, Don led the convoy to the Norths' temporary residence, and Mary and Ian laid on refreshments, hospitality, and many other items of immense interest to their guests despite the fact that they had suddenly decided to move house and at the crucial weekend were between their old and their new homes. A widespread thank you to all.

Bridget also seems to organise the V.S.C.C. pub meets at Wykeham near Scarborough (Downe Arms, second Thursdays, and Lagonda members

welcome), and for the past year or so a few local members have gone over to these. About 2330 hrs. in the cool clear crisp air of a starry October or November night the view, from the top of Staxton Brown, extending over the Vale of Pickering to the well-lit Scarborough district, is well worth seeing. Especially from the seat of a vintage open Lagonda!

R. Paterson has a bit of news about that Lagonda line in 'A Transport of Delight'. It was on the radio three times about the end of October when sung by The King's Singers on a new record of (Side One) Flanders and Swann, and (Side Two) Noel Coward. Well worth having, and it is EMC 3196.

That's also the cue for car numbers. J.L.B. recently used his proverbial charm on the staff of some licensing department or other. Just before the new regulations became effective he effected a number swap for his vast LG.45T four-door tourer and it now sports AKH 883, which is just about the right year. The charm was such that there was not even a fee to pay. Another member tried the same ploy—mentioning the name Beardow—but the charm didn't work in his case.

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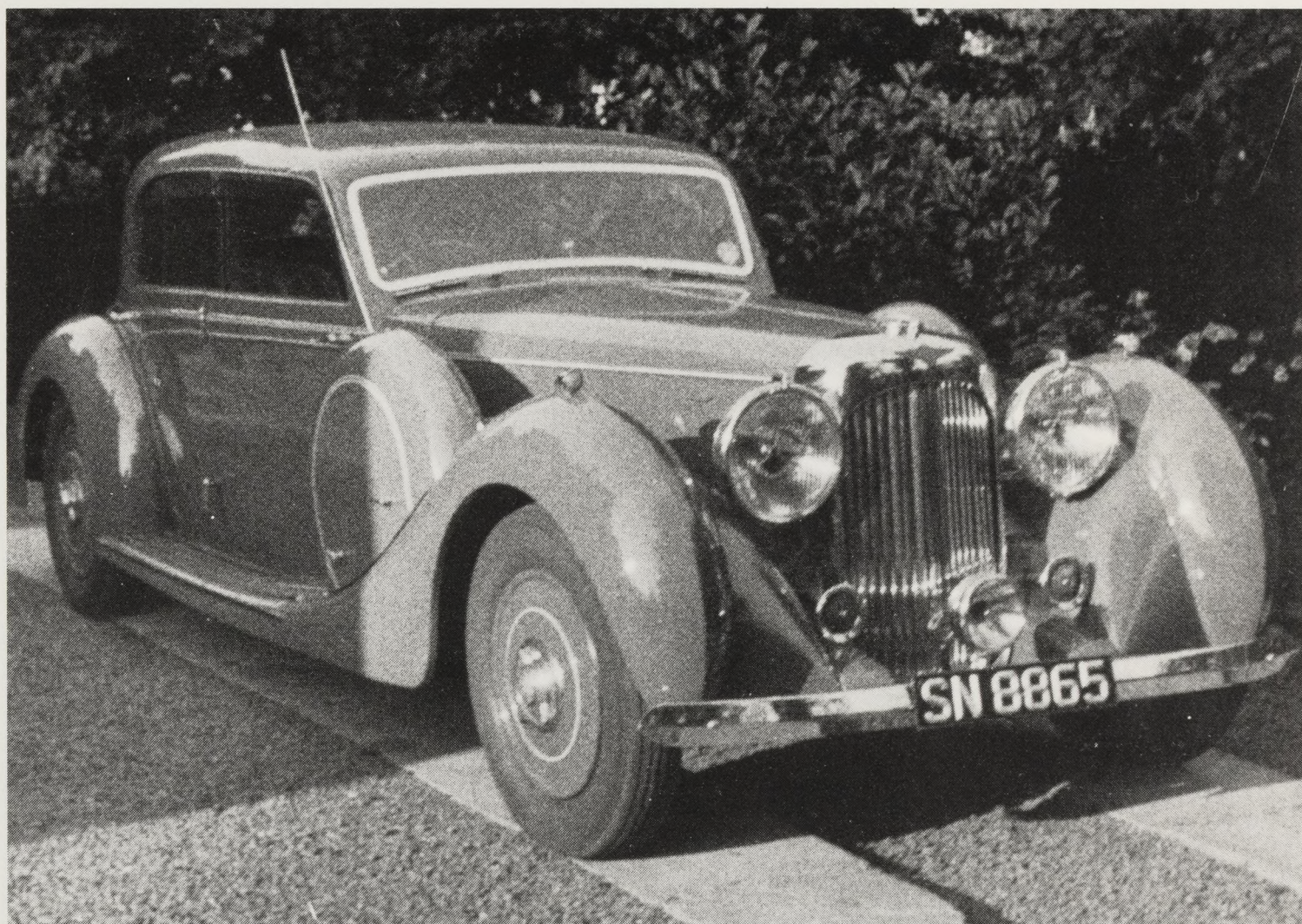
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A Dream Comes True

IT ISN'T OFTEN THAT A SMALL BOY'S DREAM COMES true. Very often our childhood ambitions evaporate in the mists of time.

But for me a dream of thirty-six years ago has been realised.

As a satchell-faced schoolboy in 1939 I used to pass the showroom of Claud Hamilton's in Aberdeen's Union Street. There, resplendent in grey was a long, low sleek Lagonda. The Lucas P100s were like a pair of eyes, huge, unwavering, on either side of an arrogant radiator.

The car lay there up until 1946. Up until then I had seen it almost daily . . . then one week-end it disappeared.

Other matters occupied my mind (was I not an amorous teenager) . . . but I was still interested in cars. My first was a 1936 MG PB. A quick trade-in resulted in the acquisition of a 1936 Ford V.8. Little did I realise at the time that what I had in the acquisition of that Ford was not an ordinary run of the mill car—for it came from Balmoral Castle! And the upholstery was Royal blue, with a fleur-

de-lys motif. I couldn't substantiate it later, but it had been in fact the vehicle of a Prince who abdicated for the woman he loved. Just think the price it could command now—much more than the £40 the local gliding club paid me for it.

After a non-car period during which money was spent on mortgages and kid's clothing I graduated to a handsome Frazer-Nash BMW type 317, sold in a moment of being in the pangs of penury for £11.

But I still thought of the Lagonda. Then, being beckoned south to Glasgow to work, I met a few people in the vintage scene.

In 1956 I met Major Hartley Whyte and his charming wife, Sheila. An invitation to his estate in Ayrshire was eagerly accepted.

And, among the Phantom I, II and III Rolls-Royces; the Aston Martin DB prototype; the 8-litre Bentley; the XK SS Jag—and others—sitting silently in a corner was . . . of course . . . MY Lagonda.

Yes, Hartley Whyte, told me, it was the *same* car as I had seen in Aberdeen.

He had bought it on 19th January, 1939, and on being called up to join his regiment, drove it north

to Aberdeen, and told Claud Hamilton's to look after it until he came back from Army service.

Hartley told me he taxed the car in April 1947, and ran it "occasionally" since then.

"Occasionally" was right, for the *total* mileage was only 19,959. Naturally, he wasn't parting with it, for it formed part of his collection, despite having been out last in 1966 . . . but every weekend the engine of the Lagonda—like all the other cars—was turned over . . . and the garage was heated all winter.

Well, it was certainly a nice car, and I had to be content with my Mark VI Bentley.

Hartley Whyte and Sheila and my wife and I became well acquainted over the years, but last January he died. The collection was up for sale—but Sheila Whyte remembered my boyhood interest, and despite forty offers for the car, gave me first refusal.

What would you have done? Bentley was sold quickly, bank manager consulted, and on 29th March of this year I became the owner of Lagonda LG.6 "Long chassis" saloon, Reg. No. SN 8865.

And, of course, I hadn't really inspected the car all that much when I had seen it a few years earlier, but a detailed study revealed:

Original unmarked carpets; *all* tools, including inspection lamp and copperheaded hammer; a dashboard fitted Phillips radio (with guarantee card and instructions); handbook; Pyrene chrome fire extinguishers; spare set of keys; carriage key for extended luggage rack; instruction card for the "British Berkshire" windscreen wipers—in fact everything that should not normally be with a car was there—including, of course, six spare original plugs! and a cubby-hole clock (working).

The only requirements were three new tyres and tubes and attention to the radiator core, extraction of eleven years of petrol in the tank and new brake fluid.

Our first run in June was 250 miles to Aberdeen. A rattle was traced to the sunshine roof, but that apart, the faster I went the better the Lagonda seemed to respond. Cornering was leech-like; there was plenty of reserve of power, and at 2,500 r.p.m. the car was merely ticking over, although the legal limit was fast approaching.

Back seat comfort was adjudged better than the Bentley—and of course the admiring glances were incredible!

The second run was the Royal Scottish Automobile Club's Silver Jubilee rally to Edinburgh in September (I naturally won my

class), and the problem there, along with many other cars was overheating. Normally the temperature never went above 80, but four hours at 5 m.p.h. shot the gauge into the boiling level, and I packed up completely, of course in the middle of Edinburgh's famous Princes Street. The car would not restart. Ignition was checked, there was plenty of petrol, and all I did was wait until the temperature went down. The car started immediately the gauge registered 40 degrees, but I had the feeling that an air lock had developed, and this was propounded also by others more knowledgeable than I. Can any members have had the same experience?

Now SN 8865, chassis and engine numbers 12521 is laid up for the winter, and next year I intend using the car—but what about having a border rally near the TRUE border—say Berwick upon Tweed or the beautiful Walter Scott country nearby?

But don't come too far into Scotland—I heard only recently of a 1939 V.12 drophead, quite near me, which has covered only a few miles *more* than my LG.6, and I'm busy following that one up!

Incidentally, members might like to know that Lagonda has a strong Scottish connection—Wilbur Gunn's surname is a well-known patronym in the Northernmost parts of Scotland. The clan Gunn is of Norse origin. The Gunns were a warlike clan of Caithness and Sutherland—the name in fact is derived from the Norse word "gunnr", meaning war.

Maybe, with his Scottish ancestry, that's why Wilbur Gunn built such good cars!

"H.29"

Midlands News

THE LAST EVENT OF 1977 WAS THE ANNUAL DINNER on Saturday, 3rd September. As last year the venue was the 'Spread Eagle' on the banks of the River Soar. A beautiful country inn, the proprietors of which provided us with an excellent meal at a very modest price. A very pleasant evening amongst equally pleasant company, terminating as usual at Pat and Neil Frajbis's abode for several nightcaps.

The new season will soon be here. Although it may appear to be a long time ahead, will we be able to complete all the jobs that need doing in time?

Before Spring springs I wish to collect information from *all* Midland members on the sort of events they would attend. I will endeavour to evaluate it and organise something accordingly. Will you PLEASE write me with all your suggestions.

If you have none, write anyway and I will send you a few. Can I expect a sockful of mail shortly after this article appears? Don't let me down, get your quills out now, and let us make 1978 the year it all started to happen.

H. TAYLOR

P.S.—Don't forget the monthly pub meet. There are always at least half a dozen of us around a table of empty jars. So come along to "The Gate", Osgathorpe on any third Tuesday and join us.

As a Boy

As a boy with a richness of needs I wandered
In car parks and streets, epicure of Lagondas,
Minervas, Invictas and Hispano Suizas;
And I sampled as roughage and amusing sauce
Rovers and Rileys, and the occasional funny
Trojan with chain drive, and the Morris Cowleys
With small inquisitive noses, sedate Fiat
Of the nineteen-thirties, and the Alvis, middle-brow
Between the raffish sports car and the family bus.
I was tempted by aircraft, too, sniffing
Over 'The Aeroplane' and 'Flight'—those kites,
They seem today, knocked up in a back yard
By young laconic artists who sketched with rivets:
Westland Wapiti, Bristol Fighter, and the great
De Havilland Hercules, invading the desert
And pulsing within its sleep like a troubled nerve;
And surely, I think, as I remember those feasts
They were days of excitement and lavish surprise?
Where is the tantalising richness and hazard
Of asserting styling, of crazy rigs,
Now that a car is unremarkably one of a million,
And an aeroplane a tubular schedule? I wander
Still in the car parks, but now uneasily,
Thinking that engineering is a sort of evolution—
Out of the fittest come the many merely fit:
And I wonder if I am wrong, or the world, whose aspect
Is nowhere strange, but is nowhere home.

CLIFFORD DYMENT

(Contribution sent to us by Frank Chasemore—
ex. Lagonda Co. Ltd.)

The AGM Weekend September 1977

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN SUCCESSION THE AGM
Concours Weekend was held at the Burnham
Beeches Hotel in Buckinghamshire. We were glad
to see this event even more well supported than the
year previously. Over 70 Lagondas were lined up

on the lawns fronting the hotel (see photograph on
page 23). A welcome return to the sort of turn-out
that was a regular feature of AGM's in the fifties.
It looks as though the Committee have found a
formula and location that suits most Club
members. To those who have not been to the last
two meetings, you have been missing out! Make a
special effort in 1978 and let us try to make it a
century of Lagondas on display.

Amongst the many faces seen admiring the cars
were a number of very welcome friends from the
U.S.A.—Bob and Helen Crane, John Lazor, Ron
and Mickey Jacobsen, Roy Shields and Everett
Smith.

After the AGM, members retired to don their
"glad rags" before congregating to the cocktail
bar set up in the dining room where the attrac-
tively laid tables awaited the Club. An excellent
dinner followed with dancing to the early hours.
Amongst the guests we welcomed were Mr. and
Mrs. Alan Curtis and Mr. and Mrs. Tony Nugent
of Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd.

Many thanks to the organisers: Robbie Hewitt
and Duncan Westall.

PUB MEETS

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Gate Inn, Osgathorpe.
Third Tuesday each month.

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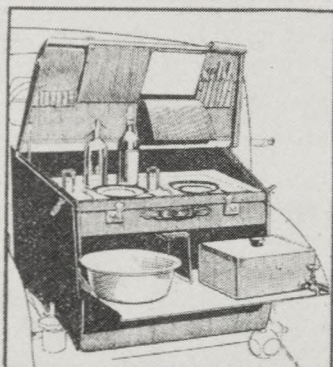
Sir Roger Tichborne,
Loxwood, Nr. Billingshurst (B2133).
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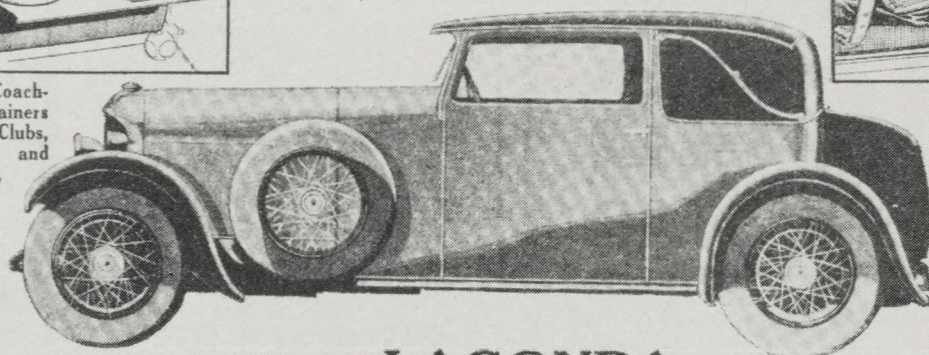
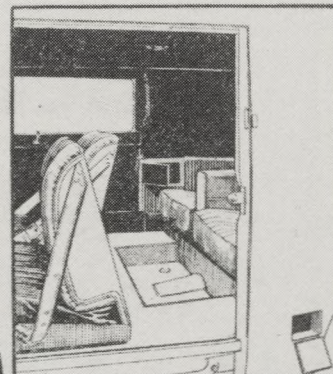


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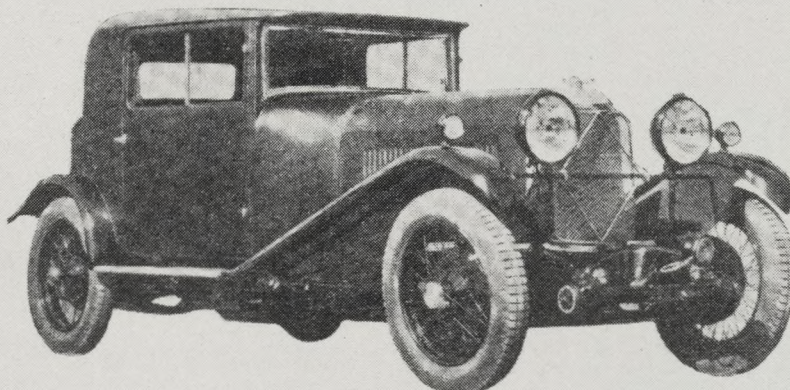
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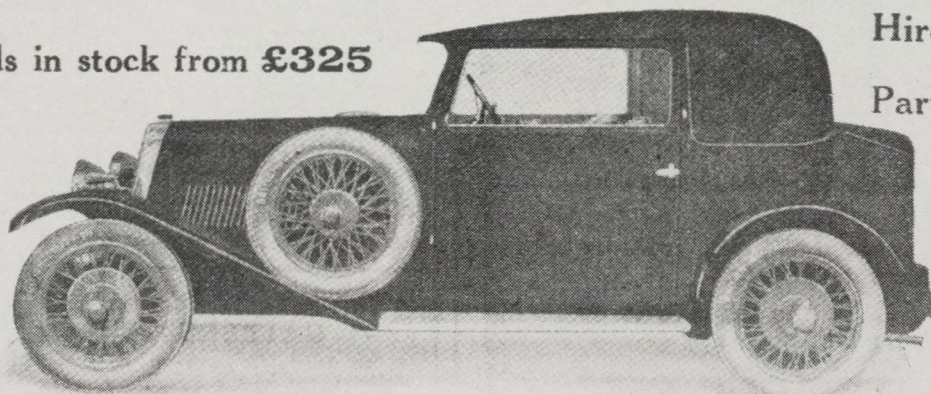
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By courtesy of Autocar.

Lagonda: the push-button express

The Bill Towns-designed Lagonda may have only four wheels, but it's probably the most advanced car in the world. Soon it will be in production, and it promises to be the saviour of Aston Martin, reports Peter Dron, who played oil sheikh for a day.

ASTON MARTIN'S DRAMATIC FOUR-DOOR LAGONDA will go on sale in the Spring. You may find the story familiar, and the company readily admits to having got "egg on its face" following the predictions it made this time last year.

But although it may *seem* that the car's gestation period has been a long one, it's important to remember that it was revealed to the public at an exceptionally early stage in its development; it only came off the drawing board at the beginning of last year.

Since the Lagonda was presented to a stunned public at last year's Motor Show, a great deal of detail development has taken place. Not much has been needed in the mechanical parts of the car—it seems that designer Bill Towns and engineer Mike Loasby got their sums more or less right first time, but the sophisticated electronics have been altered a lot—and no doubt will be altered further before the first customer car is delivered.

The company has a firm, almost religious,

commitment to deliver that first car at the beginning of April (and they've carefully chosen April 3 instead of April 1). After that they plan to build two per week until the end of 1978, when they hope to be producing three or even four per week. Already they have 180 orders, 65 per cent of which—strange as it may seem—are for the British market.

You can buy a new Granada 2800i Ghia—and still have more than £1,000 change—for the *price rise* which recently bumped up the Lagonda to £32,620. In its market, that still isn't expensive; it's a long way short of Rolls-Royce's Corniche, for example, but you can expect a couple more price rises before the production line (which is being completed) starts moving.

Last week, Aston Martin offered us the chance of driving Prototype Number Two (Number One is the car on the stand at the Motorfair, resprayed silver from last year's gold). They stressed that the car is not the finished version as will be delivered to rich buyers, but more a test-bed for themselves and a means of obtaining feedback from journalists.

We have enthused many times over the qualities of Aston Martin's four-cam light alloy V.8. In the Lagonda it is exactly as in the standard Aston, with four twin-choke Webers and a compression ratio of 9.0:1. Since the big four-door weighs about the same as the Aston the performance is similar, though in view of the gear change points it is necessary to select the lower ratios rather than to use Drive in order to obtain the best from it. As always, the magnificent 5,340 c.c. engine gives a good combination of rapid acceleration and refinement; it doesn't quite have the silky smoothness of Jaguar's V.12, but it is considerably quicker without being any more uneconomical.

During my brief time in the car it was not possible to obtain any performance figures, and indeed it was hard to tell at what speed I was travelling; a minor fault made the analogue speedo disappear after a while, and the digital version began to read slow before also expiring. However, performance is a great deal more than adequate, and I see little reason to argue with Aston Martin's claims for 0-60 m.p.h. in under 7s and a top speed of over 140 m.p.h.

All this is achieved with so little drama, that the company must be well pleased with the compromise they have achieved between performance, handling, ride and accommodation. For those who desire still more power, a Vantage version may be offered at a later date. There is a

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further possibility of two-door and even convertible variants.

The Chrysler Torqueflite automatic transmission is exactly the same as in the two-door (the ZF five-speed will be supplied only if specially ordered), though its operation is by touch buttons rather than a lever. The buttons activate an electric motor, and this is just one of the Lagonda's many significant engineering achievements.

The change-up points are unusually low: even using full throttle the Lagonda is in top by 65 m.p.h., a long way from the 5,000 r.p.m. at which peak power is delivered. Later change points would be advisable to give more satisfactory acceleration in the lower speed ranges.

It's a long, wide car (though its lowness lessens the visual impression of its size), and its width made itself very obvious on some of the narrow Oxfordshire lanes which I included in my test route. Not that it felt cumbersome—just that it was necessary to leave more leeway than usual for strange antics from people travelling in the opposite direction.

The handling is superb, and the car really comes into its own on fast, open roads. Careful detail work has been carried out on the suspension in the past year, though its basic design remains very similar to that of all recent Astons. The massive Avon tyres offer quite exceptional grip, and the feedback when they approach breakaway is as good as in the two-door. There is a touch more roll and the car is set up a little softer, but it will be a worthy contender for the title of best-handling four-door in the world. The Burman steering (described in *Motor*, September 13, 1975), is light at parking speeds but is one of very few systems which have true feel rather than just resistance at speed; in the Lagonda it isn't *quite* as positive as in the Vantage Aston we tried earlier this year, but the only other power-steered car I have driven which can compare with it is the Bristol. The ride is magnificent, especially at speed, and the big car is not deflected by bumps in mid-corner.

The ventilated discs first used on the Vantage are fitted to each corner of the Lagonda, with twin circuits and twin servos to operate them. The nose dips only slightly even under severe braking, and apart from one sharp downhill application, where I thought there was a slight hint of fade, they felt entirely capable of handling the car's very high performance.

Aston's management regard the Lagonda as "an Aston Martin moving some way in the direction of

Rolls-Royce", but it is not intended as a direct competitor. Nevertheless, the interior, though not nearly as large as that of a Shadow, is equally sumptuous, and four people could travel to the South of France in supreme comfort in this modern equivalent of the 8-litre Bentley saloons of the late twenties. Speakers for the Blaupunkt stalk radio stereo cassette system are built into all four headrests.

The interior is all Connolly leather, deep-pile carpets and perfect fitting and attractive trim. The seats were designed by Kan of Toronto and are supremely comfortable. Fore/aft adjustment, and others for seat height, tilt, and backrest angle are made by means of touch-sensitive switches set into the door. The most ingenious part of the system is its "memory": two buttons marked A and B recall any selected position of the seat so that, for example, a short-armed, long-legged husband can have one setting and his long-armed, short-legged wife the other without having to rediscover the ideal positions each time.

Electronics were the major reason that the car was the star of last year's Motor Show, and if you're looking for future trends at Earls Court, it's the Lagonda rather than Panther's exotic six-wheeler which holds the key.

In the test car the electronics are still at the experimental stage, though Lagonda Number Six is already rigged up with a more logical ergonomic arrangement of the touch-sensitive controls which govern every function of the car other than the steering, acceleration and braking.

The right-hand indicator, for example, is sensibly placed at the extreme right-hand edge of the control module, but the left-hand indicator is hidden directly beneath it. The gearchange controls (also touch-buttons!) are slightly jumbled to the left, and are rather too close to the wiper buttons. Some systems, such as the cruise control, were not wired up.

However, it's early days yet, and Number Six apparently has an arrangement similar to that developed for aeroplanes in which the controls are recognisable by touch rather than visually. Aston Martin have allowed their second prototype out of captivity not to demonstrate a finished product but to impress upon us the possibilities of the concept.

The gas plasma visual display panel is also likely to undergo a few modifications. At present there are both digital and analogue systems for the major dials; while I was quite happy with the digital read-outs of other engine functions (Temperature, oil

pressure, voltmeter, and percentage of fuel remaining in the tank) the analogue speedo and rev counter have no markings and are (in their present form) of dubious value; I am not entirely sold on the idea of a digital speedometer and tachometer, but was surprised how soon I adapted to them. If they are to be retained, however, they should be larger and clearer.

All these "futuristic" gadgets are merely an application in cars of well-proven electronics systems, and their future potential is indicated by the strong interest which Lucas, a notoriously cautious company, are showing in them. The whole system is controlled by a computer housed behind the rear seats. In production cars this will be more compact but even on the prototypes it's only about 1 ft. in length.

Servicing will probably not be as much of a nightmare as you may imagine. Electronic systems, and particularly printed circuits, have a much longer life than mechanical components, and the modular construction makes for ease of removal. This and the similarity of the running gear to that of the two-door cars may even make the Lagonda cheaper to run.

Engine noise is well restrained at low revolutions, and around town it is almost absent.

But once you get into the higher reaches of the range it begins to be more noticeable; the noise level, I imagine, would be entirely tolerable to most buyers. The exterior mirror fitted to AML 1, however, caused a lot of wind roar; it will be changed in production versions, and I confidently expect that wind noise will thereby be entirely eradicated. The tyres make a swishing noise rather than squeal under hard cornering and considering the size, there is very little bump-thump. I heard no creaks or groans, although the ashtray and cassette player both tended to flip open during fast driving.

Finish is immaculate both inside and out. The metallic brown paint of AML 1 really sets off Bill Town's dramatic angles and there are no ripples anywhere in the alloy bodywork (which is mounted on a punt-type steel chassis). It's a superb motor car, arguably the most modern production car in the world (or it will be in April), and to this beholder at least, it is beautiful. As I left it in the Earls Court car park I reflected sadly that AML 1 with all its sophistication and beauty, will shortly be aimed at a wall at 30 m.p.h. and smashed up in order to satisfy the safety regulations. NASA didn't have to do that with the Apollo rockets before sending them to the Moon.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Front cover photograph

Dear Sir—I thought you may be able to use the enclosed photograph of my Lagonda for a forthcoming Lagonda Club Magazine. Perhaps for the front cover?

The car is a 1926 14/60 2-litre semi-sports tourer first registered in March 1927. As far as I can tell the car is completely original—except for the mirror.

I purchased the car in 1963 and have been rebuilding it since then, the restorations being completed two years ago when it was put back on the road.

I have only seen a handful of 14/60's since I joined the Club in 1963 and have never, I think, seen one illustrated in the Magazine. The photo may therefore be of interest to other owners of similar cars.

I believe the only example of a 14/60 Doctor's Coupé resides in this corner of Kent and is sometimes seen at rallies.

PAUL EDWARDS
Petham, Kent.

Finmere Defended

Dear Sir—John Batt's letter in the Autumn magazine prompts me to write in defence of the traditional Finmere. This type of event goes back more than 20 years to the old Southern Rally and I suggest that one failure is not sufficient reason to alter the meeting to a Gymkhana style event.

I think John hit the nail on the head with his theory that the later date, clashing with the main holiday period, caused the lack of entries. This certainly prevented me from attending. If V.S.C.C.

Silverstone is similarly delayed in 1978, perhaps we should reschedule Finmere to a less crowded part of the calendar—June, or even May.

Turning to a somewhat different subject—on the 2nd July this year my LG.45 passed its M.O.T. test after a rebuild which stretches back to 1970 (gales of laughter from the Northern lads). This date was, not by accident, 40 years and one day after the date of the car's first registration. Frantic activity was necessary to get her into a legal condition for the M.O.T. and such jobs as upholstery, trim and spraying had to be put off until the Autumn. After initial problems with fuel supply the car went very well and I had some incredibly enjoyable motoring during what was left of the Summer after my family holiday and four weeks abroad, mostly in Japan, where the nearest to a real car was a TF MG.

My first impressions of a 4½, compared with my 2-litre, are:—

heavy steering, possibly connected with new
king pins and bushes,
poor turning circle,
slow gearchange (G10),
fantastic torque, enabling other cars to be over-
taken very quickly, even in top gear, from
quite modest speeds,
impressive acceleration.

I suppose the power of the cars is accepted by more experienced owners but to me it has been a revelation.

Reluctantly, she was laid up at the end of October, the seats and trim have been done and I am now trying to interest the local spraying expert in taking on a "paint job". With only a few tidying odds and ends to be completed, I hope to have her on the road again in the early Spring and get to a few Club meetings.

The bodywork is, by the way, a replica of the 4-seater Team Cars of 1936; an excellent picture of one appeared in the centre pages of the Spring 1967 magazine and I have followed the design of this car as far as possible.

COLIN BUGLER (B.9)

**Articles and Photos
are needed for the
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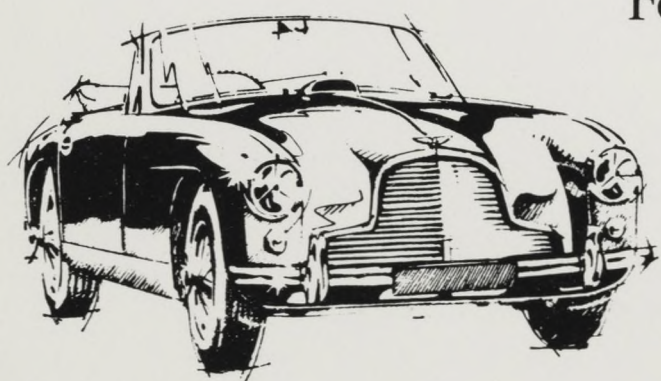


Just part of the line-up at the AGM!

Photo: Iain May

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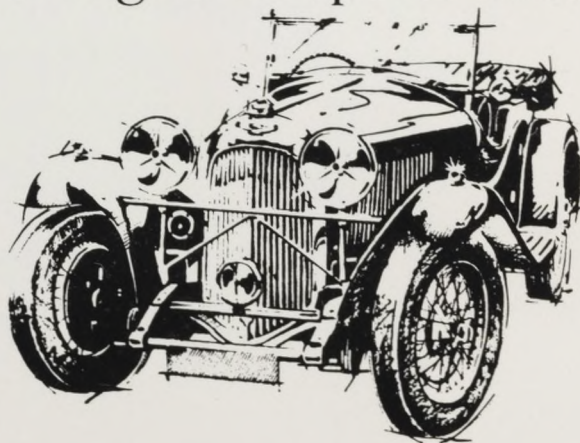


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