



## THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 115

Autumn 1982





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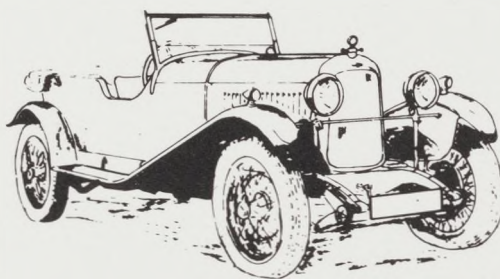
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## MAGAZINE

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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. No responsibility is accepted for the efficacy of the technical advice offered.

FRONT COVER: A summery scene at Derek Green's Social event.

Photo: Derek Green



# Out and About

THE unusually long spell of dry summer weather in the past months has meant that Lagonda events up and down the country have been well attended and this response can only be encouraging for the hard pressed organisers. Club members are notoriously hard to stir into action at the best of times but it looks as though the Club policy of having events of a more social nature is the correct one. It can only flourish however if members continue to give support by their attendance whenever they can.

\* \* \* \*

Since announcing my retirement as Magazine Editor there have been a number of volunteers who have come forward to offer their services. Discussions have been taking place and a new Editor will be appointed shortly with the view to taking over the production of the Winter issue. I will of course be on hand to help whenever required during the early stages and members need have no worries that there will be any interruption to the normal schedule of publication.

As this will be my last Editorial may I take the opportunity of saying a very warm thank you to all those stalwarts who send in articles, reports, letters and photos whether on a regular or occasional basis and for their support over the years I have been involved in producing the magazine. Keep the material rolling in to help the new Editor on his way!

\* \* \* \*

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*World Cars-1982* published by Herald Books is a massive contribution to the reader's knowledge of the world's production of cars. Even the most obscure of models seems to have been covered somewhere in the book's 440 pages.

Lavishly illustrated and each car's specification very fully detailed, this book continues to be one of the most informative motoring annuals that is published. A bonus too is the large number of specialist articles on some particular aspect of motoring today and in the future.

The book measures 9½ in. x 11 in., weighs two kilos and retails at £18.25. Expensive, but

so then is the Wisden Annual relatively speaking.

Available from leading booksellers or direct from Herald Books Ltd., 109 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3ND.

*The Observer's Book of Vintage Cars and Pre-War Classics.*

*The Observer's Book of Classic Cars after 1945.*

Both books are by Mark White and published by Frederick Warne Ltd., 40 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HE. At £1.95 each these two new books follow the traditional size of the Observer series but have a different format to their other motoring titles. Instead of a description of each car with a photograph, these books give a potted history of the manufacturer and the models produced within the given period. Not so many photographs, regrettably, which may be for economic reasons. I think I would prefer a soft cover instead of the hard back and with more photographs.

Both books are useful if you want to quickly check the cars produced at any particular time but not of great interest to the more serious car buff.

## PUB MEETS

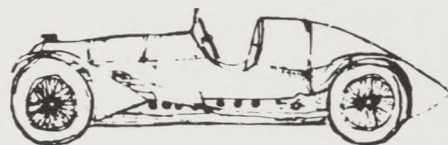
*Midlands:* Third Thursday in each month at the "Gate Inn", Osgathorpe, Leicestershire.

*Southern:* Second Wednesday each month at 8.30 p.m. at the Windlemere Golf Course Club House, West End, near Lightwater, Surrey. (Near the junction of the A319 Chobham Road and A322. Exit at Junction 3 if approaching on the M3.) Alec Downie is the organiser.

*Northern:* First Sunday lunchtime each month at the "Floating Light", Standedge, near Marsden, W. Yorks.

*London:* Jointly with the B.D.C., on the third Tuesday each month at the "Bishop's Finger" in Smithfield. Easy parking.

*North East:* First Wednesday in each month at the Cave Castle Hotel, South Cave, N. Humber-side. With V.S.C.C.





# *9th Randonnée des Trois Valées*

## *Normandy 19th–20th June*

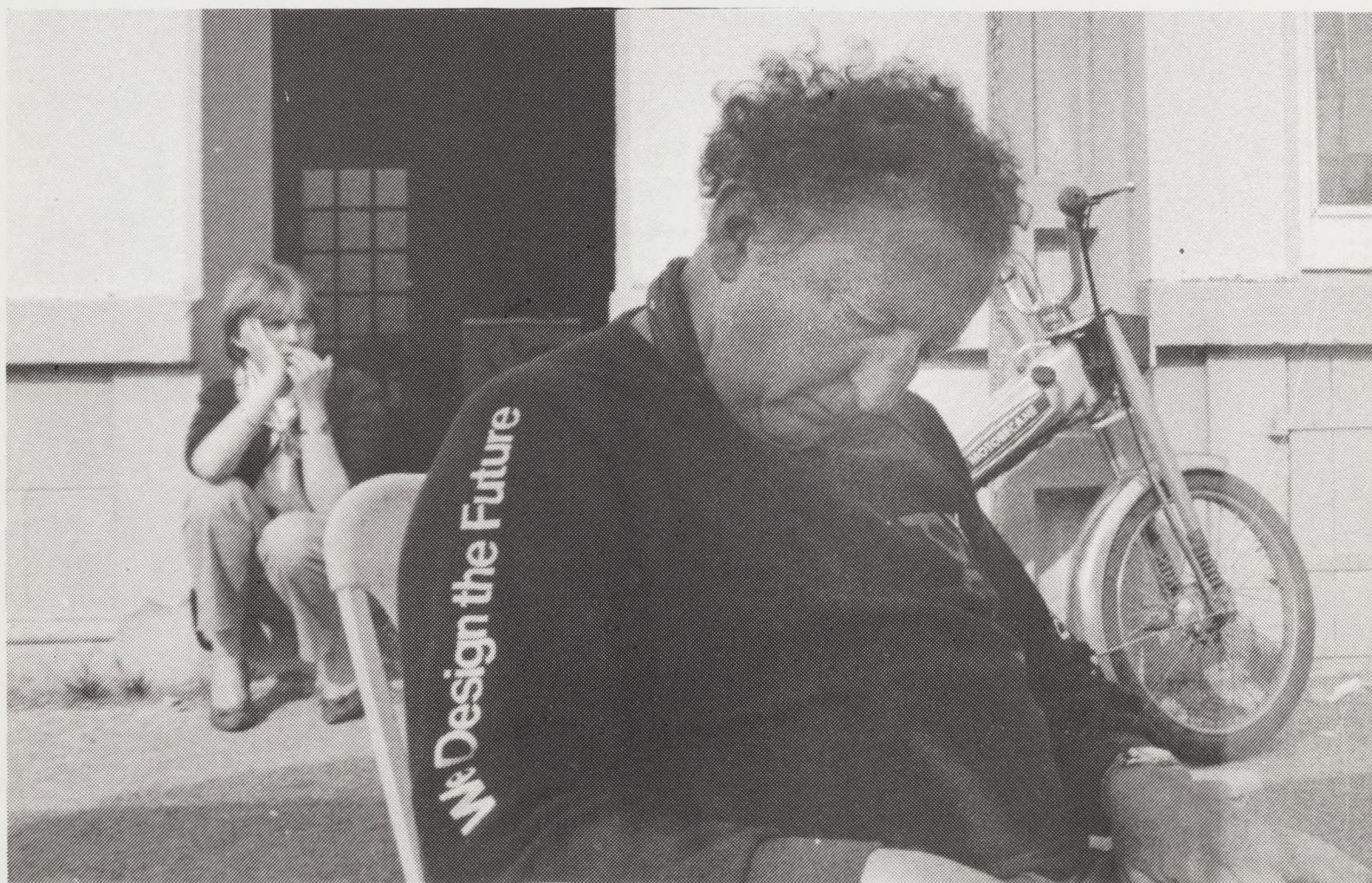
CHERBOURG Harbour is not a pretty place. At 6.30 a.m. on a cold, wet, windy Wednesday morning, after a sleepless channel crossing, feeling distinctly nervous about one's first trip abroad in an old car, the "holiday spirit" was lacking. By noon, the rain was still coming down, the hood was leaking, and the wipers had ceased to function.

That was the inauspicious start to our first venture into "international" rallying. Our car, a 1932 3-litre, had just completed a year's mechanical restoration with Peter Hunt of Redhill (with a view to entering it in the Peking to Paris Challenge). We needed to test it. Alec Downie had mentioned to me how much he had enjoyed the Normandy Rally the year before, so it seemed an idea to try it. The Organisers were the Historic Vehicle Association of Normandy.

Our initial thoughts that we had made a mistake were removed when at noon, the sun came out, and we could see where we were

going for the first time. We had intended to drive into Brittany for three days, but after an obligatory trip to Mont St. Michel on Wednesday afternoon, we decided to go to Paris instead. We set off on Thursday morning. The route from Avranches on the coast via Alençon and Dreux (N176 and N12) passes through some very pretty countryside, including part of the Normandy National Park. Before entering Paris we had a quick look at Versailles, then into Paris for a quick look at Notre Dame, up the Eiffel Tower, and a drive (or crawl) along the Champs Elysées. We thought we would go to Chartres next day, so left Paris at about 8 p.m. looking for a hotel. We were in the middle of the countryside when the heavens opened. No wiper, so we hastily made camp, and spent the night sleeping on one side of the back seat, rain occupying the other half.

Friday, very early, saw us outside the steps of Chartres Cathedral. This is truly a magnifi-



Roland Morgan overcome with excitement at the conclusion of the Boulogne Bicycle Rally.

Photo: Mike Hallows



cent building, inside and out. Then on to Alençon where we turned off to the south to look at some of the small villages in the Sarthe Valley, finally to Bagnoles by Friday night, ready for the start of the Rally the following day.

The meeting point was at Château de la Tesse, on the outskirts of Bagnoles, where we arrived at 11 on the Saturday morning. By lunchtime there were about 25–30 cars, mostly Citroën and Renault, but also a TD MG, and a 1910 De Dion. That was the French contingent. From England came a 1928 Riley Tourer, a mid 1930s Rolls Royce, Alec and Sylvia Downie with a high chassis 2-litre, Geoff and Joan Seaton in a magnificent 3-litre 1930, Peter and Hilary Whenman in a 1930 low chassis 2-litre, and Richard Burke and Sheila Hare in a 1937 4½-litre. We were handed our Rally plates, and instruction sheets, then a cold buffet lunch was had in the basement of the Château.

After lunch, off in convoy to the town centre. The afternoon's run was of about 80 miles with eight checkpoints. The object was (a) not to get lost (b) to answer questions or undertake an activity at each checkpoint (c) to answer general questions about the area which were to be found in the instructions, i.e. (Bagnoles being a spa town) how much water flows from the springs each day, what is the temperature of the water, what are the minimum sizes of fish that can be taken from the local river, what are the food specialities of certain towns etc.

We all set off, and almost immediately one Lagonda was seen going in the opposite direction. Could everyone else be wrong? No, just someone using initiative and going to the Town Hall to buy a fishing permit with the fish sizes therein!

We were soon off the main roads, and into beautiful countryside. At the first checkpoint we had to give names to three different rocks. The second checkpoint involved firing three arrows at a target. Not your twig and string type of bow, but the real McCoy. Onwards to Flers, and a stop outside the main supermarket for the third checkpoint and driving tests . . . reversing into marked bays, driving round bollards, throwing a ball into a supermarket trolley etc. Then off again, refreshed by a drink from the Rally Sponsor, and with the ball for the children. At the next checkpoint, we had to name a river we had crossed some time

before.

In this part of France you will see signs saying "Ball Trap". A certain degree of curiosity about the exact meaning of this was dispelled at the fifth checkpoint, because it means "Clay Pigeon Shooting". We had three shots at the clay, having a choice of long or short barrelled gun. Checkpoint six was "what is the gauge of the French Railways?", then cheese tasting in Caen for checkpoint seven. This was held in front of the Town Hall, which apparently possesses the longest piece of pre-World War II façade in the city. Obviously Caen was a bit of a mess after the war!

With sirens wailing, the Caen police escorted us all out of the town, and after a short while we arrived at Pegasus Bridge, the scene of fierce fighting at the time of the Normandy landings. Here we had to cast a weight on to a wooden disc moored out in the river. No more checkpoints, but on to Cabourg, the seaside resort.

We were met at the Town Hall by the Mayor and treated to drink and eats. Hotels were allocated, the cars garaged. An indifferent buffet was provided at the local Casino.

Day Two began with everyone meeting at the Town Hall again. We had about 60 or so miles to drive and six checkpoints. The first of these was near a race course, and we had to score points by throwing horse shoes into boxes. Then on via a very steep hill (a few problems here for some) to checkpoint 2. What we were meant to do I do not know, but it involved one member of the team blowing bubbles whilst the other hit the bubbles with a tennis racket. Checkpoint 3 was getting a cork from the bottom of a bottle using only a piece of string. By checkpoint 4, we were on the opposite side of the estuary from Le Havre. Here we had to choose a suitcase from a pile, find the key from a pile, put on the clothes in the case — within a certain time. The last two checkpoints required one to know the cars which won Le Mans in two years, and the name of a local French clockmaker.

Lunch was at Villers sur Mer. This consisted of huge plates of seafood — oysters, shrimps, langoustines, cockles, whelks . . . crowned with a large pink spider crab. More for entertainment than eating if the amount of food content was anything to go by! Then beef with veg, then pudding, then coffee . . . plus plenty of wine. We were still seated at 4 p.m. but were then roused by the organisers, as it was time



to get back to Cabourg for the judging and prize giving.

The cars lined up on the sea front, and then drove one by one in front of the Casino where the local dignitaries were seated at a table and our details given to the crowd of on-lookers. It then all got a bit disorganised, because most of the cars seemed to disappear. However, we were all back together again for the prize giving in the Casino. Confusion again, third prizes being given to firsts and vice-versa. However, we all won something (Lagondas picking up the team prize) and I, for reasons unknown, came home with three bottles of beer, four bottles of local cider, a bottle of apple apéritif, a bottle of perfume and a cup.

Goodbyes were said, including a speech from the Mayor and Mayoress, then on to Le Havre where we tried to get the 11 p.m. boat, on which there were vacancies, rather than wait until 9 a.m. on Monday. Our five-day tic-

ket with Townsend Thoresen had cost £98 — a bit steep therefore to be asked for £55 extra to go home on Sunday night rather than Monday morning — particularly as there was space. This greed left no choice but to spend the money in France instead!

At the end of it all, we had covered 950 miles without mishap, bar the starter jamming twice (bump started without difficulty) and the faulty wiper. I will not forget the unfailing friendly reception we received wherever we went (one coach driver waved so enthusiastically at us that he lost control and nearly hit us), and the countryside. I should like to forget the petrol consumption, but then the engine is still "new". For our £36 entry fee we had the enjoyment of the Rally, Saturday night hotel and breakfast for two, Saturday and Sunday lunch for two, Saturday night buffet for two. Not at all bad value. I would certainly like to go again next year.

KIP WAISTELL



"... and please O Lord let the sun shineth forth on our Lagonda and peace reign evermore in the house of the Seatons ..."



# *New Jobs as Business Booms at Tickford*

IN THE space of just 12 months, Aston Martin Tickford has developed from an idea to a thriving business creating many new jobs.

The company, which is the special engineering and coachbuilding offshoot of the world-renowned Aston Martin-Lagonda car group, now has two factories and a workforce of about 85.

Many of those jobs are newly created, and if projects currently being discussed get the go-ahead then even more skilled jobs will be available soon.

Not surprisingly, Pace Petroleum and C.H. Industrials, the joint owners of the Aston Martin-Lagonda Group, are delighted at the success story of the new company which started using the Tickford name just a year ago.

Mr. John Kinder, Executive Chairman of Aston Martin Tickford, commented: "When we first launched the company we knew it should do well. But I don't think any of us realised quite how well it would do in such a short space of time."

And Mr. Victor Gauntlett, Executive Chairman of Aston Martin, said: "I am delighted at the progress of the company. I believe it underlines the very great skills we are able to offer here within the Aston Martin Group."

The aim of Tickford is to provide to other companies, primarily in the motor industry, a highly trained and skilled team able to design, develop and build specialised projects.

The company, who have their own headquarters in two substantial modern factory units in the New City of Milton Keynes, can offer the facility to carry out design and styling exercises for manufacturers, taking them to pre-production stage if necessary.

They can also take an existing vehicle and give it a new look and feel. The engine can be uprated, the suspension improved to match, and the interior and exterior styling given a new coachbuilt finish.

This "new" car can then actually be built in low volume runs by the company.

An excellent illustration of the firm's ability to give an existing car a totally new look and feel is the Frazer Tickford, the luxury coachbuilt version of the Metro announced last autumn and widely acclaimed for its styling and performance.

Aston Martin Tickford have also been responsible for the development of the racing Aston Martin engine used in the new Nimrod Aston long-distance sports racing car which made a successful début in the Pace Six Hours at Silverstone, where it was the first British car to finish.

The company have recently been awarded a very large contract to design, develop and build a special version of a luxury British car, and work is now under way on production. Full details cannot at present be released because the car is still on the secret list.

And Aston Martin Tickford currently have a number of major design contracts under way which are expected to lead to thousands of pounds of extra business.

A new contract shortly to be announced involves the building of luxury limousines mainly intended for the Middle East.

Mr. David Flint, a Director and General Manager of Aston Martin Tickford, explained: "We see ourselves as bespoke tailors to the motor industry."

"We have design, engineering and coachbuilding capacity second to none in the country and other firms have been quick to use this experience."

"We believe there is an extremely strong future for us, and at a time of recession we are pleased to be able to actually create new jobs."

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# *Disaster at Applecross*

IT WAS the middle of May 1981 when I set out from Glasgow with my mother and father-in-law for a few days holiday. We were heading for Loch Maree in the North West and so took the A82 to Fort William.

I was driving my 1956 3-litre Lagonda Reg. No. VPW 5 which I had bought several years before in Scotland. It had taken a few years to complete a thorough renovation including a total mechanical overhaul. It carried us north in faultless style, having covered about 7,000 miles at this time since the engine was rebuilt.

Being a Scotsman travelling on holiday on a Sunday perhaps I should have had some premonition of the trouble which lay in store.

However, we carried on our jaunty way to Invergarry where we turned left on to the A87; the "Road to the Isles". Just short of Kyle of Lochalsh we took the narrow road which brought us to Achnasheen and within 10 miles of Loch Maree. A further 20 miles saw us at our destination — halfway up the loch at the Loch Maree Hotel. This hotel is delightfully situated on the banks of the loch and after dinner we

considered a few possible activities for the next day. It is interesting to note a stone in Gaelic lettering (a translation in English framed above the front door of the hotel) commemorating a visit to the hotel by Queen Victoria in 1895.

The following day was bright with the sun shimmering on the water and since we had come prepared for a little fishing my father-in-law and I obtained a permit for one of the local lochs. With my mother-in-law carrying out the purchases for a sandwich lunch we set off to drive the few miles to the hill loch. There was hardly another vehicle on the road and we had the whole loch to ourselves. Needless to say although the fish also had the loch to themselves they were not keen to surface for our benefit. By lunch time we were, alas, empty handed.

In the afternoon we decided to tour round the Applecross peninsula where a new road had recently been laid allowing a round trip instead of the previous dead end. This took us to one of the most remote parts of the country

*Note change of date.*

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but a good vantage point allowed us to see Skye in hazy sunshine.

We were now halfway round the peninsula and about to start the second half of the journey back to our hotel, where a hot bath and a couple of gins and tonic awaited us before dinner.

We set off from the village of Applecross where there is a very steep climb — in fact one of the steepest in Britain. About a mile out of the village as I was accelerating fairly hard in second gear and just after crossing a cattle grid there was an ominous metallic clatter from under the car. I was lucky to be able to pull into a layby which was almost level but my heart was in my shoes. A quick inspection under the car revealed nothing of note and I considered it to be either gearbox, prop. shaft or differential trouble. Although the car could move I did not want to take any chances of causing further damage. A quick look at the map will show how remote Applecross is and I had terrible misgivings about the car's condition.

I contacted the A.A. headquarters in Inverness using the telephone in the nearest house which was about ¼ mile away and where I was

made most welcome. The soonest I could expect help, I was told, would be in about 2½ hours. We agreed to wait at the local hotel to be picked up.

This hotel had not yet opened for the season and could not supply a meal. So from about 4 p.m. we drowned our sorrows in the traditional Scottish manner and chatted to the locals. The trusty A.A. patrolman arrived about 8.30 p.m. and we placed the car on the low loader without much difficulty.

We set off in the A.A. Range Rover back the many twisting miles to Loch Maree and in the darkness the cheery patrolman regaled us with amusing stories concerning his experiences on the road. He dropped us at our hotel, by this time about midnight, and took the car on to Poolewe where a good garage was situated. Despite telephoning the hotel previously they had forgotten all about us and had almost shut up shop for the night. However, they did provide a meal of sorts and we wolfed hungrily into meat sandwiches and cake.

The next day I climbed aboard the local bus which passed the garage at Poolewe where my car had been taken. I had a word with the garage owner who had inspected the car. He was an Englishman believe it or not — from Sussex if I remember rightly. He told me that the support mounting brackets for the torsion bar rear suspension had broken on both sides. Apparently there had been pre-existing cracks which was one item I had failed to inspect during the renovations. He thought he could carry out repairs which would at least take us home. Indeed the good man with his engineering skill had the car ready the next day. I was much relieved that there was no other serious fault and that no further damage had resulted.

We set off home on Wednesday about lunch time. We reached Muir of Ord and returned at last to fairly busy traffic conditions. After an evening meal at Beauly we had a rapid journey back to Glasgow on the A9 from Inverness, with no trouble from the rear suspension.

In retrospect I feel I was let off lightly in the type of defect which occurred since other types of mechanical failure could not have been so easily repaired. I was greatly impressed with the garageman at Poolewe. I must also record my grateful thanks to the pleasant and helpful A.A. patrolman who saw us out of our initial difficulties. Despite this nasty little episode we considered our holiday a success.

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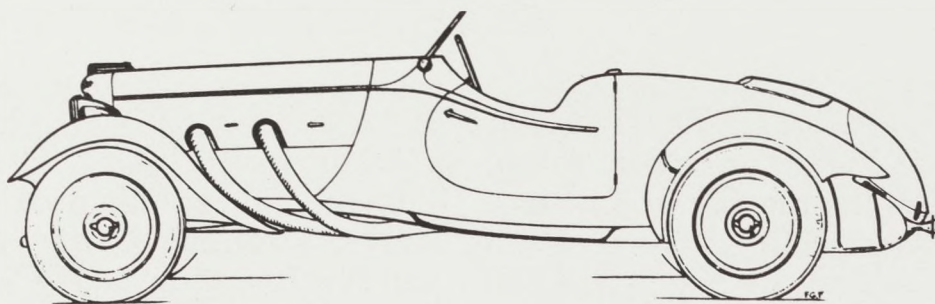
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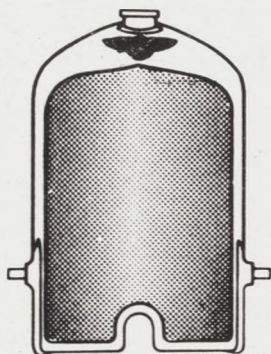
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# Kigass Rules – O.K.?

by Peter Towers

THE letter in last month's magazine regarding the Kigass pump reminds me of my own experiences with the damn things. The Golden Rule must be, if it works leave it alone, and if it doesn't, proceed with the utmost care and caution. I have never experienced so much frustration over such a relatively simple device. Some weeks ago my Kigass stopped working. As usual I was in a hurry and as the 16/80 won't start from cold without four or five good pumps I rapidly got into a bad temper as well as a hurry, and after 10 minutes or so whacking the thing in and out, achieving nothing more than a sore wrist and a mild coronary I packed it in and got the modern tin ware out. At the end of the week I telephoned the 2-litre Guru down in Phoenix Green to ask his advice. I explained the problem, and the symptoms, which weren't many, and he explained to me the principles on which the pump worked; some lengthy discussion followed and finally Peter asked me if I would check that the balls were in the right way round, referring to the inlet and outlet valves of the pump.

Now a badly corroded or ill-seated ball might just conceivably work the wrong way round so I retired to the workshop to take the pump apart and have a look. In removing the inlet valve union it broke off, leaving most of the threaded portion in the valve body together with the spring, and the ball was stuck in the neck of the union. Greater care being exercised with the outlet union I managed to remove it without breaking it; this revealed the spring and the ball stuck in the pump orifice itself. Aha! I thought, no problem, remove the debris, fit new balls, springs and unions, repack the gland end and we're home and dry so to speak. It was not to be like that at all. Fate, Time, Metrication and Standardisation, the Great Gods of Engineering had decreed otherwise. The brass unions were not to be had from any of my usual sources in Birmingham, the City of 1,000 trades. Each enquiry brought forth the inevitable response from the pimply-faced adolescent behind the trade counters. "WHATSITORF" and upon being told, the equally inevitable response "CANTELPYER". Whereupon he or she would relapse back into the semi-comatose

state in which I found them.

Living in some proximity to Redditch, known throughout the world for its needles, fish hooks and springs I felt that there would be no problem with the pressure springs. Again it was not to be. One man offered to make me some if I placed an order for 5 million and another said he did not have a spring that size but had some very small fish hooks. This left the ball bearing, and resisting the temptation to go to Schweinfurt I found an Indian gentleman with a bike shop in down-town Brum, who with all the grace and charm in the world sold me a packet of 50  $\frac{5}{32}$  ball bearings. I was heady with success.

Some days passed by and interest in the problem waned, in fact I was pretty fed up with the whole business and eventually telephoned Kigass in Warwick. I spoke to a Mr. Ramsley, the Sales Director, and poured out my troubles to him. Never mind, he soothed, send me the parts and I will refurbish them as new. This bucked me up considerably and kindled fresh interest in my breast. The next time that I was in Warwick I called on Mr. Ramsley, but unfortunately he was out. However by this time I was sure that all I needed were the parts and so I collected them, returned home and commenced fitting. Fifteen inches of packing went into the gland, balls, springs and unions into the valves, and Hey Presto... Nothing. Did you know that there is a PRESSURE FACTOR to be taken into consideration? This is achieved by drilling out the union to a critical depth to accommodate the spring or ball depending on which valve. Ideally the outlet needs to be slightly harder than the inlet, but after many hours of trial and error and using up all the brass unions I have not found the correct pressure. I HAVE found out though why the unions snap off. It's because the counterboring of the union removes so much metal to take the spring that it leaves it paper thin at the thread run out. With no more unions I have admitted defeat and sent the whole lot off to Mr. Ramsley. In the meantime I have found in my junk box a very dirty old "LUTENHEIMER PRIMO PUMPE" which with the aid of two lengths of rubber tube to connect to the existing pipework, works a treat. I may well leave it there until I feel better again.



# *Southern Social*

## *Sunday 16th May 1982*

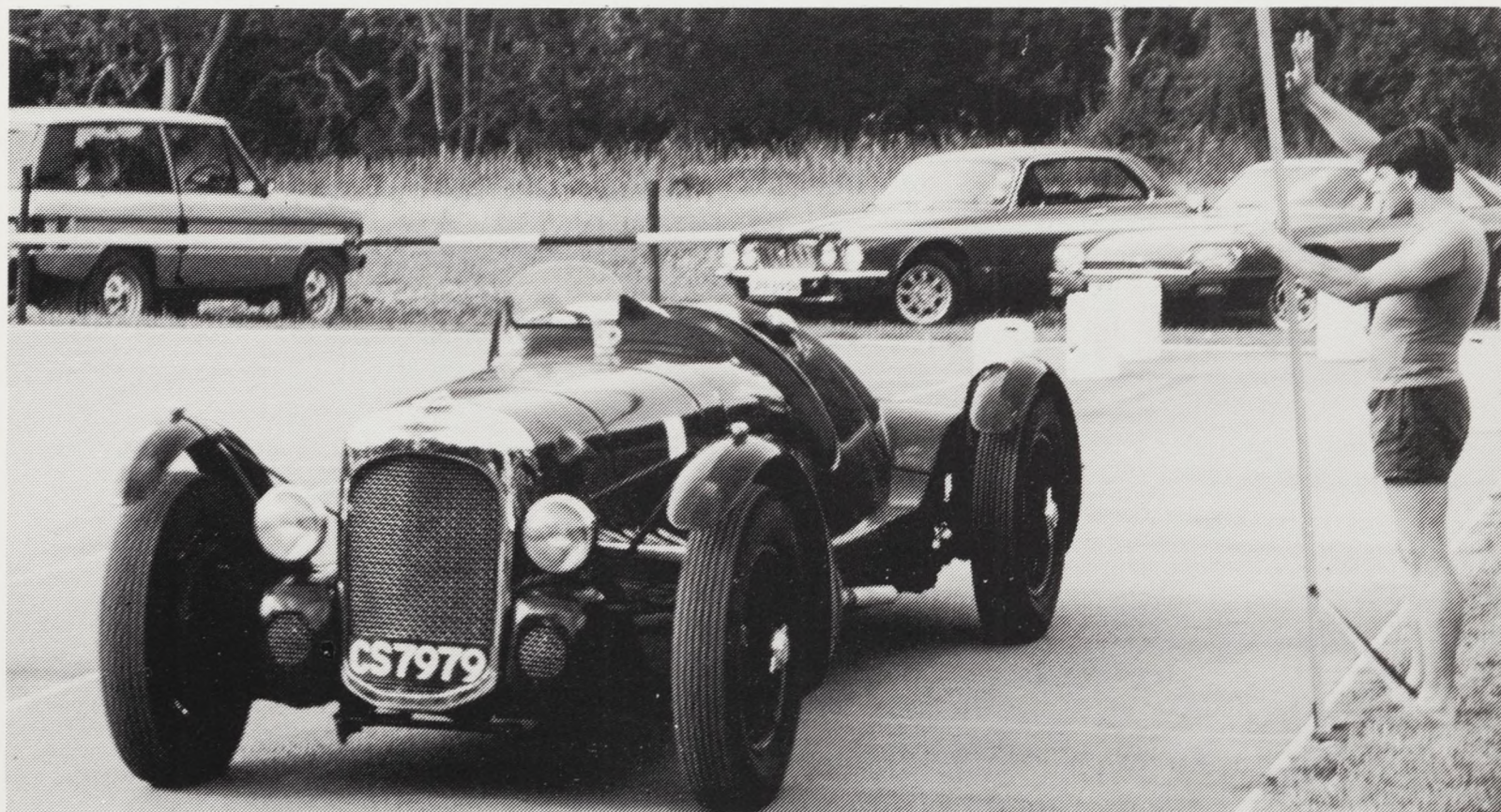
THERE were a good half-dozen cars already at the Ely Hotel by the time I arrived in company with Alec and Sylvia Downie in their high chassis 2-litre, which looked as immaculate as ever. Jeff Ody's green 3-litre saloon was complete with period gramophone, Mike and Pam Maher provided a 2-litre saloon, while Pat Baker had brought a Frazer Nash-BMW pillar-less saloon — most unusual. This trio of closed cars ensured excellent weather for the whole day, which attracted a good crowd of open cars such as Paul Watts in his 2-litre special. Peter Sutcliffe had driven his 1928 2-litre up from Billingshurst — his first outing in the car — its heater (such luxury) being an interesting feature. Driving tests had been planned at the nearby barracks; however the M.o.D. suddenly demanded payment more appropriate to a full-scale V.S.C.C. event, so alternative arrangements had to be made.

Just before closing time Robbie Hewitt arrived in her 1934 Team Car; a generous offer of a drive in this was eagerly accepted, and we set off in convoy for a gentle cross-country amble to Stratfield Saye. The power provided by 4½ litres of Team Car is quite something

when compared with the usual blown 2 litres (in need of a rebore). Even at modest r.p.m. the performance is impressive — the excitement at higher speeds had to be left to the imagination. We were following John End's Wolseley Moth, and appreciating his use of Castrol R in the engine.

Stratfield Saye is the home of the Duke of Wellington, and contains many mementos of the 1st Duke. A reduced entry fee and some free tickets had been obtained for us by Stephen Weld who arrived as always in his Crossley. One of the most extraordinary exhibits was the six wheeled funeral carriage, weighing in at 18 tons; this made the Lagondas look flimsy by comparison. Richard Wills was our last arrival, and quickly got involved in a technical discussion about oil surges. His car rivalled Peter Whenman's Speed Model and Geoff Seaton's 3-litre for excellence of condition. A good day out was rounded off by the drive home which took us past a mile of woodland with a shimmering carpet of bluebells — a marvellous sight.

D.F. de S.C.



A headless horseman at Hartley Wintney?

Photo: Derek Green



# Havoc in Hartley Wintney

WHAT! You said we'd do it again this year . . .  
The things you get me roped in for, young  
Green!

O.K. But how long have we got to get  
organised?

Next Sunday!

And on that particular Sabbath was created  
. . . Merry Hell and a Treasure Hunt!

Our rusty Citroën lurched out of the garage  
with compass set at Greenwich meantime or  
some such and with Ordnance Survey maps  
jammed by each of the electric windows to  
stop them taking off in the breeze. The aim  
was to get the veterans — sorry, vintages, to  
the house in Hartley Wintney for coffee and set  
off on the route to arrive at a certain solubrious  
inn by lunchtime: a good 30 miles we  
reckoned should keep them happy. What we  
hadn't bargained for though is how these car  
owners do talk . . . it took a lot more than WD40  
to get them moving that Sunday morning!

Needless to say things were running late but  
eventually we saw off our 18 or so entrants —  
and saw off again in Phil Erhardt's case as hav-  
ing driven eight miles, he realised he had  
missed the first right turn! The route took our  
intrepid drivers through Hampshire's notori-  
ously narrow lanes and with planning we had  
managed to avoid major roads. Experience  
has taught us that Lagonda owners are a  
canny bunch and last year's clues were a piece  
of cake. This year, with Harding and Erhardt's  
brilliance still bright we opted to make 'em  
harder — so hard in fact that we didn't get  
many answers! Still, the route was pretty,  
wasn't it.

Having despatched our charges we beetled  
off to set up the next stage of the route: a pic-  
nic under the Oaks of Bucklebury Common.  
The first car in was the first to have left the  
house: Anne and Tony Wilson in their lovely  
silver grey Delage. Did this mean our instruc-  
tions were really accurate and no one had got  
lost, we wondered. Apparently not as a bevy  
of Lagondas, a Lancia and a Riley followed  
them in . . . we were even graced with Robby  
and her Dobby, hot-foot from the big City.

Fed and watered, our stalwart drivers and  
their navigators tried their hand at the odd  
game of chance, a blindfold puzzle, a spot of  
golf and a cartographer's quiz — all adding  
vital points to the final tally. For the gluttons

there was further punishment, another 20  
miles or so of route and clues through the  
Berkshire dales, culminating in driving tests,  
or home-made cakes and lemonade at  
Burghclere Grange School.

George Gibbs and his pupils had devised an  
ingenious circuit of trials to tax our drivers.  
Speed and agility and a keen sense of judge-  
ment won David Northcliffe the fastest award  
of the day, but, as each car bonnet sported a  
full tumbler of water — for at least part of the  
course, there were a few dampened spec-  
tators!

Talking of water, the Gibbs kindly proffered  
the use of their swimming pool and, on such a  
sticky day there were plenty of takers, some  
suitably dressed and others none too suitably  
attired!

As we relaxed on the lawns a speedy calcu-  
lation revealed the day's winner — a stranger  
in our midst, but a well deserved winner: Dave  
Northcliffe and his family in their Riley —  
closely followed by Messrs. Harding and  
Erhardt.

Our thanks to all who supported our humble  
affair, in particular to the three generations of  
the de Salis and Downie family and to our non-  
Lagonda friends, not to mention friends,  
family and neighbours who lent a hand.

Yes, Green, it was hard work but I'll do it  
again next year—gladly! SALLY AND DEREK GREEN



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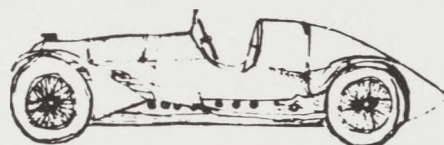
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## ***In Register*** ***by Arnold Davey***

I RECORDED briefly in the newsletter the passing of Tom Marris and intended this article to be his obituary. But on looking at my notes of meetings and correspondence with him, I feel it should be expanded quite a bit, if only to set down in more public form than my notebooks some of the stories he had to tell for which there was no room in the book.

Tom was born in 1896 and first went to work at Lagondas early in January 1922 as a spindle hand in the sawmill. His credentials for a job at Lagonda were impeccable, for apart from his own skill, his father was a millwright and his sister Elizabeth had been one of Wilbur Gunn's two servants. (Unfortunately she died in 1977 about a month before I "discovered" her and thus was lost the opportunity to hear first-hand about Gunn and his household.) In 1923 Tom was made foreman of the sawmill, a job he held through the vicissitudes of the bankruptcy, until August 1938 when he was made Superintendent of the body building side, that is to say he took over the panel

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Evenings — Weekends



beaters and sheet metal workers, the body shop, the trimmers, the paint shop and finishers, in addition to the sawmill.

Within a year of this promotion all car production ceased and the firm was totally reorganised for war production and Tom, whilst retaining his sheet metal responsibilities, also took charge of building maintenance. This last is a very innocent-sounding name for a worrying job in war-time, since he was responsible for the safety of the building during all air raids and evolved a system of graded call-outs of key people according to how bad the damage was likely to be (and also how near the person concerned lived and how he could get to the factory).

After the war, there was yet another upheaval and Tom was in effect demoted to sawmill foreman again, which after looking after 750 people, went down very badly and seeing that the future of Lagonda was uncertain and that the new 2.6 had an all-steel body, he decided to leave and with a partner set up in business in Staines in 1947 selling and, later, making woodworking machinery. This was a brave move at the age of 51. Unfortunately the partner was less than honest, causing the firm to fail and Tom had to go back to being an employee, although not at Lagonda. In all he was involved in making cars for 24 years.

Now for some of those stories. I asked Tom his views on W. O. Bentley. In some ways he was the traditional boss, but in others quite different. When the "Bentley" company put up the new boilerhouse chimney it was decided to paint it, and a contractor did so before installing the letters that spelled "Lagonda" up the shaft. It was WO who asked Tom if he had seen that the top surface of the chimney had been painted and who insisted that he go up on the cradle to check. (It hadn't.)

On another occasion Tom was summoned to the bodyshop where WO was sitting in a nearly complete LG.45 with a cigar lighter in his hand. It was obvious, although WO didn't speak, that the problem was to find a suitable place for it where it would be convenient but its heat would not damage the french polish. Tom suggested a place. Silence. Another suggestion. More silence. A third. Still silence. This went on for an hour and a half until Tom said "Well, Sir, I think the best place is . . ." Before he finished, WO cut him off. "Only Mr. Bentley is paid to think. We will adjourn till tomorrow." At that he stalked off. The whole

episode baffled Tom for the rest of his days.

One year it fell to Tom Marris to organise the works outing. To Dieppe on that occasion. It was arranged that the staff would pay in for months beforehand. Frames were responsible for the travel arrangements and negotiated a special price provided a train-load (200 people) took part. Inexperienced in these matters, Tom was prevailed upon to let one or two people cancel their booking and have their money back a week before the event. Whereupon, nearly everyone wanted to back out. He panicked. Fortunately Frames were able to advertise the trip around Staines and Surrey generally so successfully that in the end three train-loads went, among whom were some familiar faces, but not many.

Then there was the day when all chassis production stopped for some reason. Hours went by and no chassis. Tom Marris went to see the chassis assembly people to see why his departments were all standing about reading the paper. Eventually they were persuaded to release one chassis, but couldn't get it to start. It was pushed and pushed and then suddenly fired on all six cylinders when about 3 ft. from the end of the shop and went clean through the wall.

As Lagonda were on vital war work the incessant building operations didn't stop in 1939. Far from it, they were redoubled. In digging foundations for a new building they struck oil. As it was extremely hard to get it in the war, this was marvellous. Even more marvellous was the discovery that it was pure Castrol XXL, so that they wouldn't even need to send it to the refinery. It was a bit of an anticlimax to find that they had only hit a buried, forgotten, 40 gallon drum left over from some earlier move.

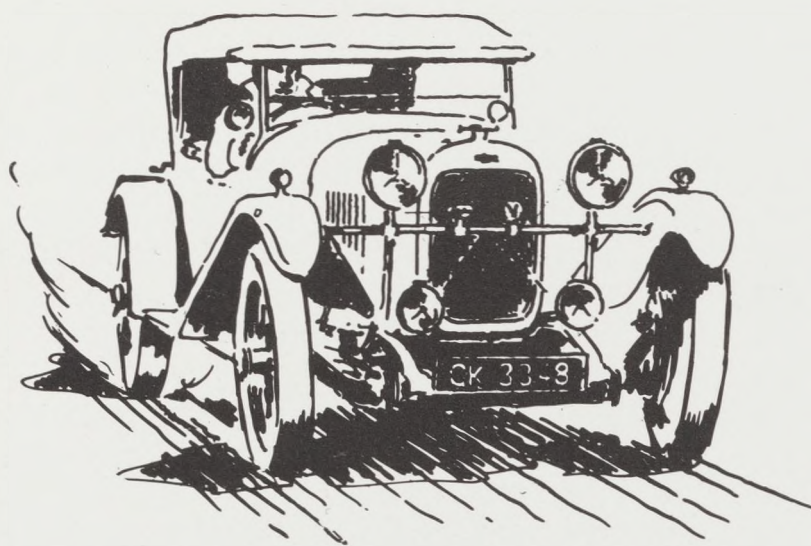
The "Ironbarks" building was completed about this time and management deemed that a gala opening was called for. Tom got the job of organising it as an extension of his maintenance duties. Strings of VIPs were on the invitation list and to make sure of everything he organised a rehearsal the night before. It was a total disaster, went on till the small hours and was made worse when the conscripted "stagehands" found their way into the bar stores. Tom got no sleep at all that night and his family had great difficulty in getting him to go in at all the following day. Showbiz followers will guess the rest; it was all right on the night and went without a hitch.



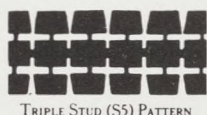
# Peter Whenman

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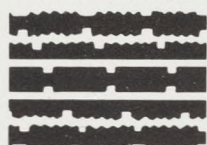
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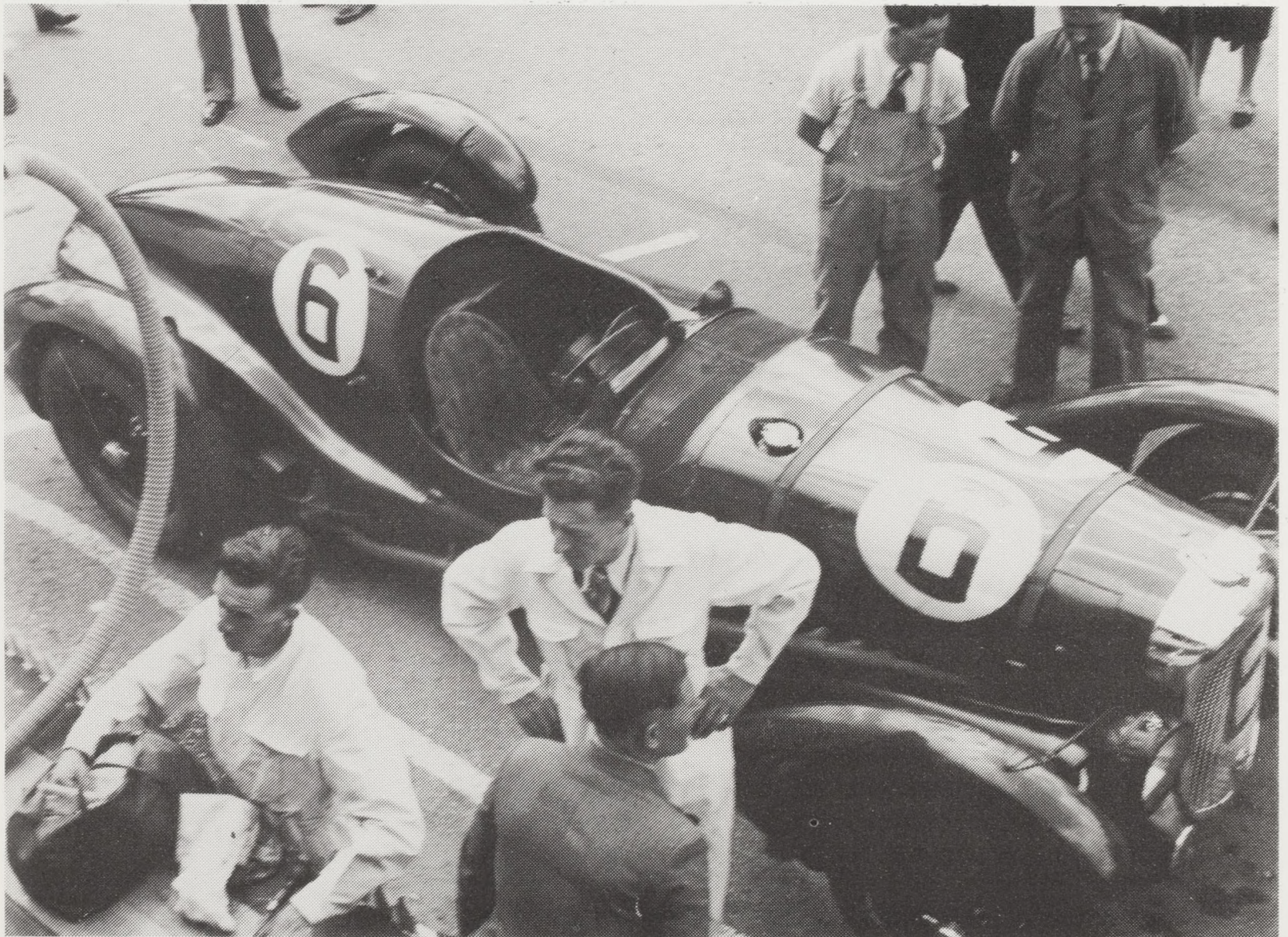


# Sandtoft Treatise

WHILST I admit to reporting a few events at different venues, never before have I been assigned to the Driving Tests, Northern Area. Why Herb and Alan have given up this assignation, I cannot imagine. It turned out to be a decided pleasure. In addition to the usual fee there was an added delight — no bonus stamps but three bonus kisses. (I might even get one from Norma next time!)

Don Hoggard presented the only 3½ litre car there, his exemplary Silver Jubilee tourer. The reason its hood was erect all the afternoon can only be guessed, every other car was wide open. The other cars competing were one LG.6, four LG.45, two M.45, one 2-litre, and one other make. Ken Pape and his splendid 2-litre were spectating, together with Eleanor Townsley and Ted's LG.45T, the Beardows and their "other make" with a winged B, and wives, families and friends, various. Some

90% of the personnel were regulars, Alan Brown acting as Commanding Officer, the others with longer service than most being Schofield (enlisted late 1950s), your reporter (never missed since '56) and Rider (1954). Longest serving regular must surely be Pape (1953) but had there been a gong for combined age of driver and steed, assuredly must this have been awarded to Watt and his 1929 2-litre. Other long service men include Turner, Beardow, Hall, Hill, and Hine, Hoggard, Firth, and Hatfield. Bernard and Amy Raine have supported for many years as have Ted and Eleanor Townsley. Short-service commissions are held by Hyett (Pay Corps, or is it MI5?) and Mike Hoare (i/c despatch riders). Reisner qualified for the Award of Gallantry, and his 2nd in command deserves a mention-in-despatches, for their leadership of the much appreciated company of marshals. The



The V-12 at the 1939 Le Mans.

*Photo: Harold Nockolds*



Captain was conspicuous by his absence; rumour has it that he had a vehicle surplus to requirements, or else he was drumming up the Davenports (AWOL).

The Townsleys have taken up *la dolce vita*! It is suspected that Eleanor has bought Ted a new video camera outfit for his birthday and he has complemented this with a power-pack shaped like an LG.45T. Perhaps we shall see.

There were six tests:—

*No. Description*

- 1 Le Mans type Reverse Start
- 2 Wiggle Woggle Balls (forward and reverse)
- 3 Circling to control a string
- 4 Regularity (forward and reverse, ratio times)
- 5 On Your Marks (finish own choice of place)
- 6 Rolling Home (in neutral)

*Best performance*

Firth = Hine

Firth, C. Woodhead (guest)

Hall, Hoggard

Firth, Hine

Firth, C. Woodhead

Hoggard = Rider

All the gen having been fed into the computer, there was time to recall Northern Driving Tests in general, back to 1953 anyway. This was pre-Sandtoft, but Ken Pape marshalled. Gordon Rider was there in 1954, and then in 1955 the venue was changed from Bircoates to Sandtoft. Apart from 1960–1962 (Sherburn, Tholthorpe, Riccall), it has been there ever since.

Last year my red and black LG.45 arrived on the runway simultaneously with a red and white Cherokee Cruiser which taxied to a standstill. As its pilot disembarked I came to a position alongside and he asked me what all these cars were doing here as he knew nothing about it and it was his land we were on. At that point I wondered whether there would be a 1981 meeting, never mind a 1982. But having heard a brief history of the event he said it would be all right, "Carry on". In 1975 we had a few red alerts whenever a sit-up-and-beg cropspraying biplane landed to refill its pesticidal tanks. This year a helicopter kept its eye on us. Some years the atmosphere has been electric when trolley buses have trundled about. Further back in history we've had free beer to celebrate a car's birthday or for sheer bonhomie; some can even remember when Gordon lived locally and his family ran a welcome tuck-shop. Once we all arrived

at The Reindeer to find it closed; whitewash on the road surface led us on to The Wheat-sheaf, and we've become regulars there.

An interesting fact is that these Northern meetings are usually dry, climatologically speaking. Records reveal that there were two or three showers in '73. The previous year there had been longer rain after a dry start, but that was entirely the Club Committee's fault. They presumptuously altered our time-honoured First Saturday in July to the second Saturday. Saturday 1st July 1972 was fine up here, if only they had stuck to tradition. They've not mucked us about since.

Once, however, we came really unstuck. That was in '63. The downpour was incessant, the runways awash, and John Turner was so disgusted when his best car (LG.6 drophead) got wet that the meeting was abandoned. Indeed, he was so utterly and dejectedly disgusted, that he didn't bring that particular car back again until this year. It certainly looked cleaner, but in case it ever happens again the LG.6 with its 19-year memory recall now insists on a lifebelt being strategically placed under its boot. And in case this looks incompatible, the extra buoyancy is camouflaged as a spare wheel. All other years the weather has been dry, often sunny, and sometimes a positive scorcher.

Happy memories abound of earlier Sandtofts, when they became known as Northern Gymkhanas. At one time there was always some associated passenger-participation, dressing-up activities, use of umbrella, youngsters hastily quaffing a bottle of pop after the time-consuming decision as to whether orange or lemon, cherry or sarsaparilla, while agonised drivers helplessly awaited their return to the passenger seat. Come to think of it, the first time I ever saw a pre-1914 suction cleaner was when Henry Coates supplied a pump-handle model for incorporation in one of his tests. Iain Macdonald once boiled all the way down from Newcastle, so thought up a remedy and published it in *The Lagonda*. Eliot Elder once brought a very cut and shut Rapier from Edinburgh, of which a member of the medical profession opined that it would shake out the fillings from his teeth. Then there was the year a special LG.45 topped the results, all the other thoroughbreds being beaten by the 11.9 in second place.

Dress has always been informal. The



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scorching years have naturally produced the greatest amounts of visible suntan with the least amount of clothing. One year a notable young lady successively displayed two different tops in one afternoon, which was thought provoking to some. Often the males have had no tops at all, Brian D-B was an exponent of this. We missed him this year because of a sad accident to his Mme Fifi. This year had its fashions too, Alan Brown marching around in service-issue KD shorts, tropical; Roy Hatfield in Lag blue tracksuit; Mike Hoare in a complete motor cyclist suit of genuine leather (but not fringed); and there were two of the new club sweatshirts displayed on manly chests. Unfortunately none of the ladies has a sweatshirt yet. And one chap wore a stetson!

Way back in the fifties, the Compleat Spectator selected a more protective ensemble with the essential accessories of ear-plug protection against 6,000 revs plus wheelspin, dark glasses to obscure the bursting exhaust flashes and impending catastrophe, noseclips to negate the stench of smouldering rubber, scorching clutchplates, and simmering oil; bicycle clips to prevent high velocity gravel from shooting up one's Oxford bags, and yashmaks to divert the entry of choking dust clouds. No longer can Sandtoft reporters truthfully write

"... handled their saloons well, much heel-ing on corners and much terror on the faces of the passengers."

It is bad enough being detailed to do a dissertation—thank goodness I was not appointed *Concours d'Elegance* judge. I really believe that Galondas on parade at Sandtoft have never attained such a high standard. There were 10 Lagondas in action as it were, with two more in reserve, and 11 of them could well have returned straight from a brigadier's inspection.

The 10 Lags and one other make were between them driven by 17 different drivers competitionwise and a number of others socially. That's part of the spirit of Sandtoft. A result adds point to the occasion in addition to its being the *raison d'être*, so back to that computer.

The tests being reputedly designed to give equal chances to drivers of the long wheel-base as well as the short, the powerful and the not so powerful cars; the results had an element of surprise. Indeed, for the first time in 27 consecutive years of this event so far as I am

concerned, I have been issued with a Results Sheet. It must be a reporter's privilege; praises be, thanks, and alleluiah. The long-awaited conclusion is made easy.

Results:

1st, Nigel Hall (52 penalty points; 2nd, Roger Firth (71); 3rd, David Hine (109); 4th, Roy Hatfield (159); 5th, Don Hoggard (202); and 6th, Gordon Rider (232).

Except for Don in his 3½, the other five were all 4½ mounted. The 11 not named individually all completed the course with between 249 and 814 points.

And long may the Driving Tests, Northern Area, continue!

ROY PATERSON

---

## John S. Broadbank

REGRETFULLY we have to record the passing of this former enthusiastic member of our club. He died whilst driving home early one Thursday evening. No other vehicle was involved, his passenger was not injured, and the Clerk to the Coroner reported that the accident was "inexplicable".

John's service to us can be traced through issues of *The Lagonda* over the years. He submitted articles, reports, and photographs to the magazine itself. On the competition side not only did he compete and marshal, but he organised driving test meetings and rallies. Socially, he arranged numerous Christmas Dinners. By profession he was a commercial artist, and through his own talents and his business contacts he provided us with quality programmes, menu cards, and prizes.

His father was in farming. Through this John was lucky inasmuch as he had known the late esteemed Henry Coates longer than any of us; from his schooldays, in fact. It seems almost macabre that before John rebuilt his M.45R tourer, long stored on Henry's farm, it had belonged to Jack Allison who also died comparatively young.

John's widow, Gillian, has moved to Cleveland to be near her own parents. To Gill and to John's six-year-old daughter Rachel, we feel all club members will wish to extend their deepest sympathy; John's own parents and brother will miss him too. And so shall we. We shall also remember with gratitude what John has done for our club.

HERMES





Happy group at the Northern Pub Meet (the Townsleys, Joan Schofield, the Turners, Beryl Firth, amongst others).

## *Letters to the Editor*

### **To the Northern Dinner from the South**

Dear Sir — Phil and I got up early, 12 noon (that's early down south) on the Friday of the Great Lagonda Club Northern Dinner and Alan Brown cabaret. First stop Watford, where, as those who have travelled north are aware, one gets one's passport stamped, visa issued, vaccinations dealt with and a free phrase book in case one has to stop and ask directions en route.

On previous occasions we have travelled by Lagonda, but this time we were without. My M.45, having been abandoned since December, had two valves that refused to move and Phil's M.45 had cracked its crank very unthoughtfully. Both are now running again I'm pleased to say.

We jointly own a Bentley Mk. VI special so we drove up in this. Upon arriving in the car park of the Monk Fryston Hotel, I mentioned to Nigel Hall that it was a joy to drive. He replied "Looking like that it ought to do something well". That closed that subject, so we slunk into the hotel to be greeted by tea, biscuits and

a host of happy Lagonda owners.

Just made dinner in time, as the bar was open beforehand and I got so merry I cannot remember any more . . . over to you Phil . . .

Phil Erhardt will now try and continue . . .

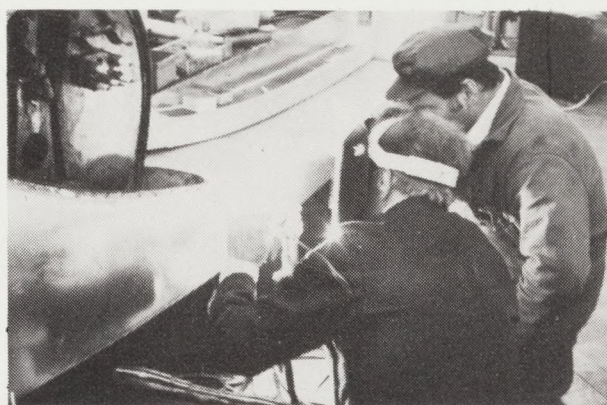
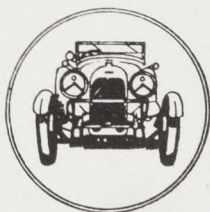
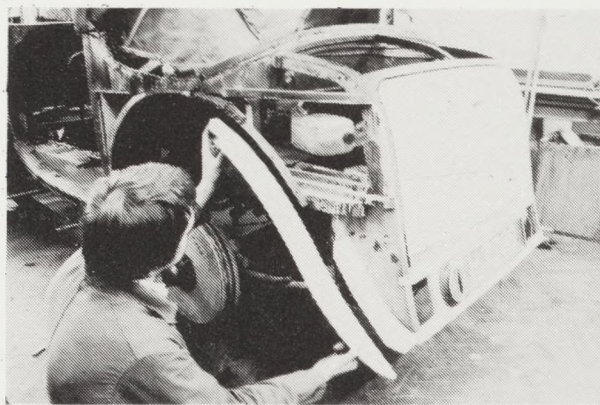
Thank you, Joe. Actually I can remember very well what Nigel Hall said about a certain non-Lagonda we used that day. I quote "Well it b.....\*\*!!\*\* a shovel!!"

It was good to see all those Northern faces again, as well as the super array of cars they present. I always wonder at this event if there could possibly have been a Staines, Yorkshire. Southern members were up in number slightly, I believe, and starred, amongst others, Stanley Mann of V.12 fame. (He arrived a little late because of a puncture, apparently caused by V.12 con-rods left on the M1 the month before.)

After a very pleasant meal, which Herb assures me has remained almost the same for 20 years, the only change being corned beef for chicken, our Chairman gave a speech on the state of the Nation (also unchanged). This



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was then closely followed by a prize-giving (fixed) and an ode from David Hine.

Next year the coach leaves from Victoria at 3 p.m. and we'll be on it . . . will you?

JOE HARDING

## Mystery Man

Dear Sir — There was a strange character at a recent event. He was of medium height and build, and wore dark sunglasses. To give himself an air of authenticity he sported a new Lagonda sweatshirt and would have remained inconspicuous as just a good Lagonda Club member except for . . .

Our suspicions were aroused by his headgear. Cloth caps (especially back to front for driving) are our style in these upper latitudes, but he wore a dark stetson. He mentioned, in passing, that it was a gen-u-yne Yankee job, but certain spectators thought it was from somewhere east of Suez, the Yangtse, or Hong Kong.

Putting two and two together, we remember that one of your erstwhile occasional cosmopolitan correspondents has been lying doggo for some time. Was this he, now entering into recirculation? Are we correct in

assuming this mysterious character is the enigmatic, elusive, *Jo Rot*?

And has he a twin brother called Tommy?

THE NORTHERNERS

## Midlands Section — A.M.L. Visit

Dear Sir — The day started cloudy but dry and two Lags left Nottinghamshire and headed South. We were joined by Colin Colquhoun and family in their 2-Litre at Weedon and on to Towcester we journeyed. Here the contingent swelled to six cars and after coffee we proceeded to Newport Pagnell. The total line-up here was 13 cars — the addition of a V.12 and an M.45 would have provided practically a full model range.

Naturally there were few changes in the factory apart from re-siting of various operations. Production at present is five cars per week — four Lagondas and one A.M. Distribution, generally is three Lags to the Middle East and one to the States. The order books are full and many applications for dealerships have been received both from the Continent and the U.S.

On emerging from the factory we found that the clouds had disappeared and the drive home was executed in brilliant sunshine, a



fitting conclusion to a most enjoyable day.

H. TAYLOR

### **Appreciation of Valerie May**

Dear Sir — Quite apart from knowing Valerie (as all good members must) I worked in very close co-operation with her in the far-off days when I did my stint as Treasurer at a time when the sub was half a guinea. Incidentally I moaned bitterly to James Crocker about the extra 6d which upset my book-keeping and made it more difficult to add up. He remarked that guineas were excellent things and that "... we solicitors live on that extra shilling". I wonder if he remembers?

I digress. This letter is about Valerie.

We got on very well and I realised even then that the club depended on her. She was very efficient and knew how to blend this most essential quality with an apparent "all the time in the world" approach, which I knew she certainly did not possess as there were two young children in the family at the time.

We survived the May's move from Eastbourne to Lindfield and the consequent change of the address. We survived bankers orders which were always in the wrong amount and the appalling extra work involved by those extraordinary people who will not pay their subs until forced to do so.

Very best wishes to you, Valerie. Happy memories from:

PETER DENSHAM  
Vice-President.

### **Letter from Bob Crane**

Dear Sir — I developed a pretty bad arthritic hip joint and had an operation on 12th February to replace my worn-out joint with a nice new stainless steel job. I have been home for some time and my hip is mending nicely and I am almost back to fine fettle. Amazing what has been developed in bone replacement.

I got my car back from its restoration place before I went into hospital and just got it going again two weeks ago. Alas, the brakes were soft. So I had to remove the master cylinder and have been able to get a set of internal parts and I am having the scratched bore reamed out and a new brass sleeve put in. Hope to have it ready for a meet on 5th June.

I have been in luck. The shop where my car was since 1st December has burned to the

ground and 20 beautiful cars were completely lost. Mine would have been one of them if I hadn't gotten it out when I did.

BOB CRANE  
Sparta, N.J.,  
U.S.A.

### **News from Australia**

Dear Sir — On the car front the ex-Knox ex-Whitehead V.12 saloon is in the process of being dismantled prior to going to the coachbuilder for some minor repairs and repainting. On a more positive side the little Rapier F.H. Coupé is due to return from the painter early next month. It will then only require detail assembly. The two-seater now has all the machining completed for its engine rebuild and hopefully will be ready to receive its replica Eagle body when it arrives during December. Last but not least the Racing Rapier special is now hopefully recovered from its major blow-up and subsequent problems with water where the oil should be and oil where the fire usually is.

Given sufficient pressure Jeff Ody should be able to give you a report, with photographs, on some Down-under Old Lags at play, as he was our guest at a V.S.C.C. of A. Sprint Meeting during his most recent trip to these shores. He may need some prompting.

The mention of Jeff reminds me of his letter suggesting the Dirty Engine Trophy, perhaps I may take the liberty of suggesting yet another. Having just been presented with the V.S.C.C. of A. "Disaster Award" I would like to propose that the Club consider a similar annual prize in recognition of the most dramatic Blow-up for the year. On this occasion I have no wish to be the recipient for 1982.

BERNARD JACOBSEN  
Victoria,  
Australia.

**MAGAZINE  
CONTRIBUTIONS BY:  
WINTER: NOVEMBER 15th  
SPRING: FEBRUARY 15th  
SUMMER: MAY 15th  
AUTUMN: AUGUST 15th**

*Thank you*



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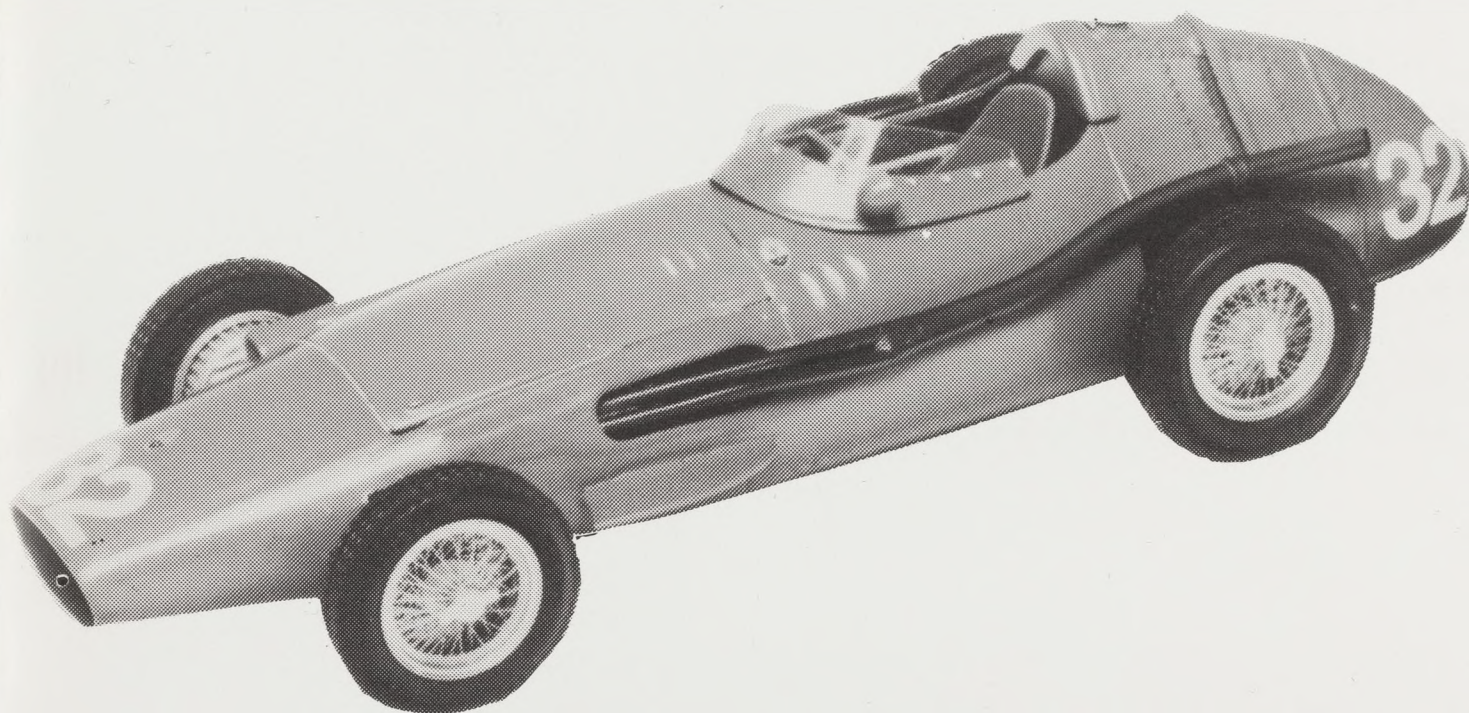
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