



**THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 144

Spring 1990



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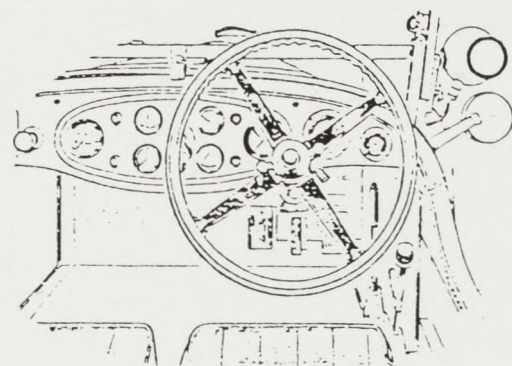
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From the Driving Seat



One of the unexpected pleasures of editing "The Lagonda" is the frequent contacts it generates with former staff of the old Lagonda factory. In this issue John Berridge reminisces about another of his colleagues from those far off days and, in the pipeline for a future edition, I have very generously been loaned one of the wartime newssheets produced by the factory to keep the staff morale high. This has been provided by Frank Ayto, nearly 87 years old and still going strong!

The son of Stuart Tresillian lives just two miles from me and he has promised to sort out some of his father's memorabilia from the days when he was one of the development team for the V12. So far he has not managed to lay his hands on it, but you may depend on it that I will keep nudging him! Apparently, most of his papers were passed to his former secretary after his death as she intended to write his biography, but this is yet to appear. Now if I can just find out where *she* lives . . .

Many years ago, I met Bert Hammond at one of the London pub-meets and I am *sure* that it was he who told me that the 2 litre Continental was originally built to the special design of a customer who, when the factory then began to produce replicas of his personal design, took them to court and sued for infringing his design. This, I was told, was the reason that so few were made. Can any of our historians or former staff members confirm or refute this tale? I have never seen it in any of the accounts of Lagonda's history and have never heard it repeated, so is it true, or did I imagine it?

I have been delighted with the offers from fellow members to visit them and

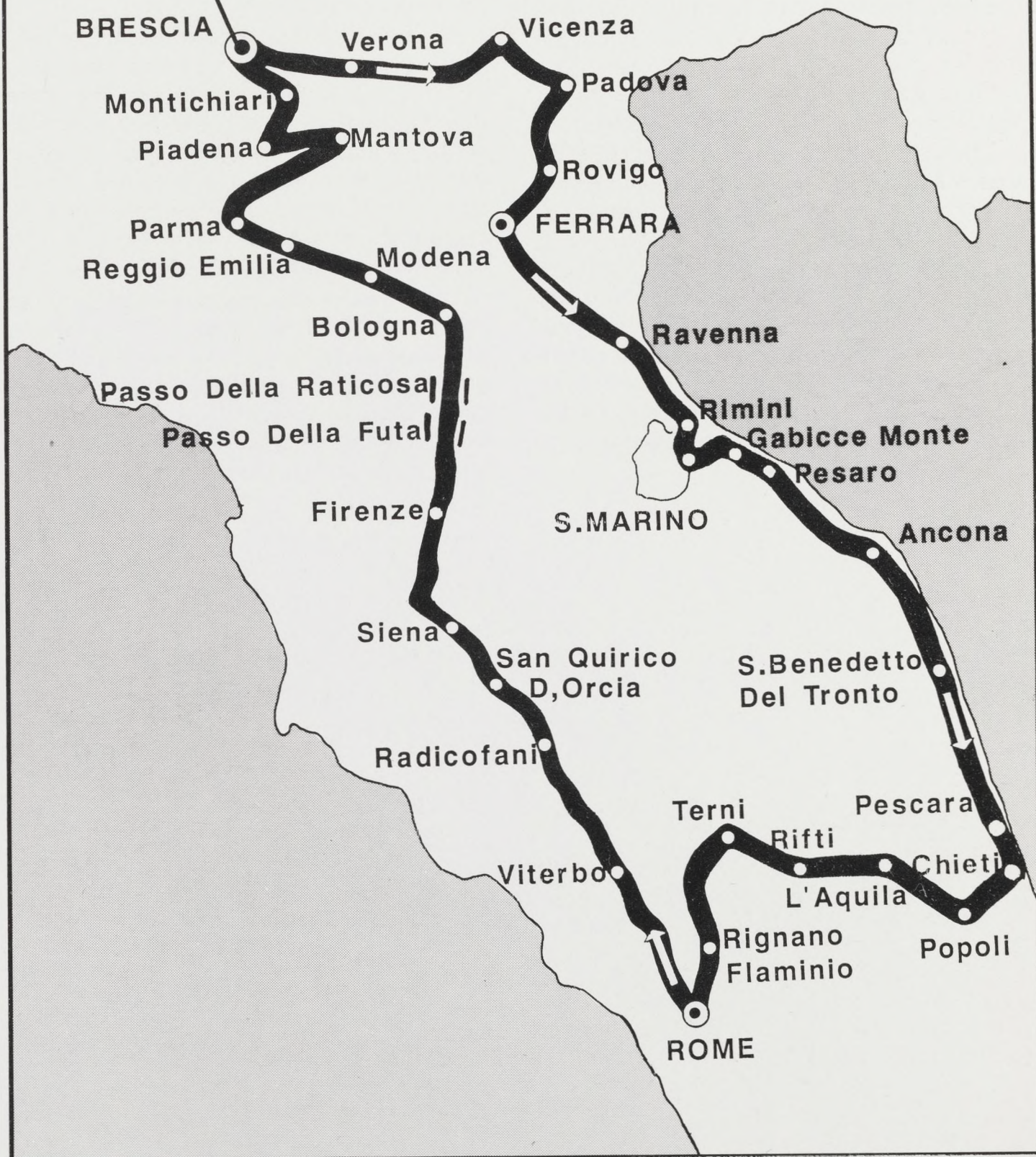
examine their Weymann saloons and have even been contacted by a previous owner of my old car, but real vintage Weymann 2 litre saloons seem to have disappeared completely. I have to confess that, when we owned our saloon, we actually looked very seriously at the possibility of replacing the body with one from a tourer, but had to abandon the idea as we simply couldn't find a good second hand body and couldn't afford a new one. I had always kidded myself that, at least this meant that at least one very fine saloon was preserved, but now I'm not so sure, perhaps we simply delayed its metamorphosis into a replica tourer. Can those fragile and broken remains in my garage really be the very last of the Weymann 2 litres?

The more eagle-eyed among you might notice that this magazine has been printed by a different company. After many happy years with Kenion Litho, who recently changed their name to CBC Print, we have moved to a company in the barren and frozen north who have made us an offer which we simply could not afford to ignore. The magazine represents the single largest expense to Club funds and we would not be serving your interests properly if we did not keep a very tight control on its costs. Kenion/CBC will be a very hard act to follow, they gave us a first class service and only the editor will ever know how much he depended on their kindness and patience when he was picking up the reins after a gap of many years since his last attempts at editing a magazine. This is therefore a very public, yet a very personal "Thank you" for the work of Roger Cooke and his staff.

K.P.P.



The Mille Miglia Route



gastronomic delight for breakfast, only to find that it consisted of dry biscuits and coffee so thick I swear you could stand the spoon up in it!

Richard was to drive the first leg, from Ferrara to Rimini, today. Back at the car we found that everybody was already leaving, so we hastily joined the queue in the right place for our running order and were off on Day Two, this was going to involve some serious motoring as the section was no less than 750 kilometres and was scheduled to take 14 hours.

The first stage, from Ferrara to Rimini was 300 kilometres and at an early time check we were given a bag of bread rolls and a punnet of strawberries, this was just what we needed, so we pulled off the road and finished the lot as our belated breakfast! We had actually come prepared for the long haul between controls, with a big bag of sweets, Mars bars and packets of soft drinks, but the frequent gift packs thrust at us en-route were always very welcome.

On the sea front at Rimini we had to undertake a regularity test of some $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre. This was no casual event, the timings were taken to .1 of a second and it was differences as close as this which decided the final positions. To make matters worse, it started to rain quite hard at this point, making things very uncomfortable for us.

By now, we had begun to settle into some sort of routine and had begun to make sense of the route book. We were sharing the driving on a two hours on two off basis and, to start with, the weather was good, but this was not to last. Today was actually Richard's first opportunity to drive the Lagonda and he passed the test with flying colours!

After Rimini we began the drive up to the Republic of San Marino. The surface was good and the road was potentially fast, but by now the rain was really coming down hard and painfully. It was my turn to drive on this stretch and I really got the bit between my teeth and enjoyed myself



Not like Silverstone! The scene at scrutineering.



Spectators lining the route.



Richard looks absolutely exhausted at the end of the day's run.



The finish at last. Brescia, 10.50 p.m.

Monday morning saw the formal ending of the run and we had to haul our now very creased and crumpled jackets, ties and slacks out of the car for the official reception, which was held in the enclosed courtyard of a palatial mansion. The reception was followed by a terrific lunch. The star turn at the lunch was a vast iced cake in the shape of the whole Mille Miglia route, built all the way round the fountain in the middle of the square. The roads and even the cars were all beautifully depicted in icing sugar, fantastic. There were lots of speeches and the usual showbiz style presentations, then it was really all over.

How did we do? Well, we finished way down the list, but we *did* finish and that is more than many of our fellow competitors managed. The car came through with flying colours, one Scintilla magneto gave up at some point and that

is all the trouble we had. Everywhere we went the car was feted, with cries of "Bella, bella" "Fantastico!" and the infectious enthusiasm of the Italian crowds overwhelmed us. No wonder there is a certain magic about the Mille Miglia. For both of us it was a truly fantastic drive.

It is always grossly oversubscribed and we were lucky to be granted our entry in the circumstances. Although it is probably true to say that the first hundred entrants are VIPs, pop stars and ex racing drivers, and therefore automatically get an entry, it is no longer a race as it was originally, but it is still a test of both machine and competitor. How Moss and Jenks managed to cover the course in just under 10 hours 8 minutes in 1955 defies the imagination.

Would I do it again? You bet! Ciao!

Peter Whenman, with Richard Bush

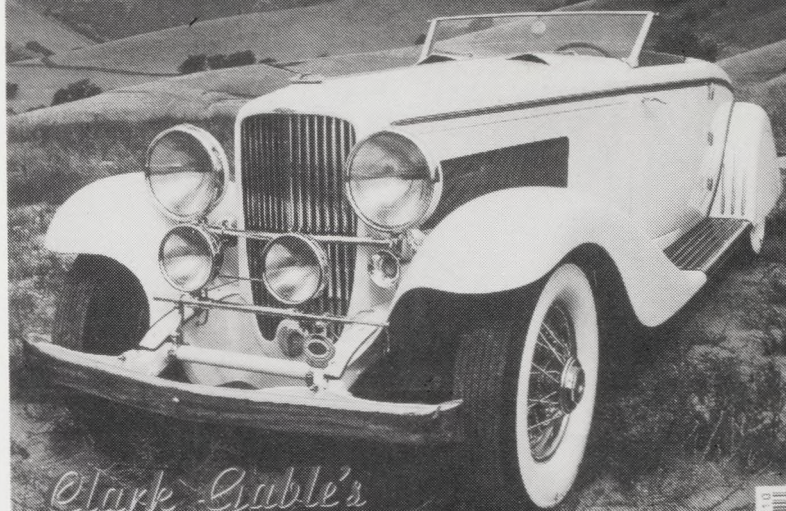
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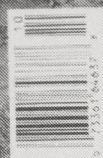
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different. I cannot recall a cylinder block ever ending up as unusable. When Harry had decided that he had set up the casting to the best place, he would then carefully scribe heavily marked lines for the first machining ops and any "specials", then he would centre punch the lines to identify them, "just in case". The first milling operations were done by Bill Winckley, who showed me how to cut good gears on a milling machine. (That's very difficult.)

Harry could split 1/100th of an inch with his pointers and mark out accurate long lines to less than five thou. In his young days, Harry had been the superintendent of the gun shop for the Japanese Navy in Tokyo and he showed me an album of photographs of his working days in the gun shops of the Vickers company in Tokyo.

As a matter of interest, we too at Staines became gun makers. We were the first to make an anti-tank gun, the six pounder. Not very big. The calibre bore was somewhere around 60mm, or two three-eighths and, from that, we learned the art of boring very long accurate holes in gun barrels six feet long. It was rather heart-breaking at first, when the swarf chips persistently broke off at the tool points and caused deep tool marks, which couldn't be honed out.

But back to Harry, he must have been

around 65 to 70 years of age as I knew him and he was extremely agile, tall, shock-head of white bushy hair, with strong hands. Harry could easily split five thou and then some with a rule and his scribers and he made all his tools himself.

The steel slab was actually a precision surface, supported at six points on adjustable legs; it must have weighed a good two to three tonnes.

Harry was also ready to check off the first of any casting, forging or stamping from the foundry, of any part not made before, so that the "firstoff" was kept in an approval museum in Len's final view room.

Later, when I find more relics, I'll tell you how the gear wheels were made, before the modern machines for gear rolling were invented. We were allocated three Lees Bradner gear rolling machines and two Pfauter machines, which made life a lot easier. By gear rolling and rolling tooth grinding, modern gear tooth forms are far more accurate than the old ways and mesh with the silky silence we now all expect.

Harry must be long gone and his skills haven't been handed on to any modern machine shop, but his skills are still needed at all the workshops where machine tools are made . . .

John D. Berridge

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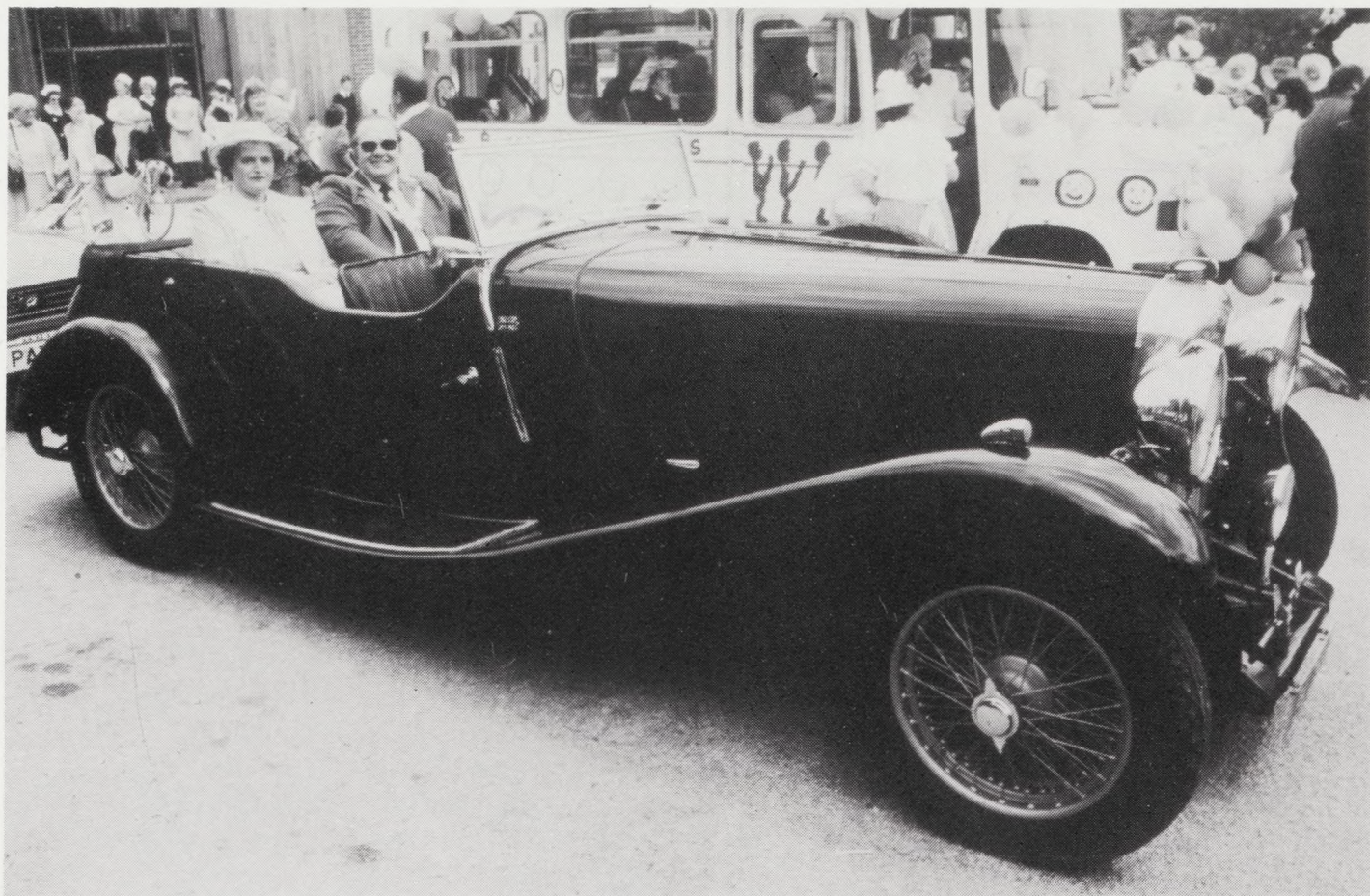
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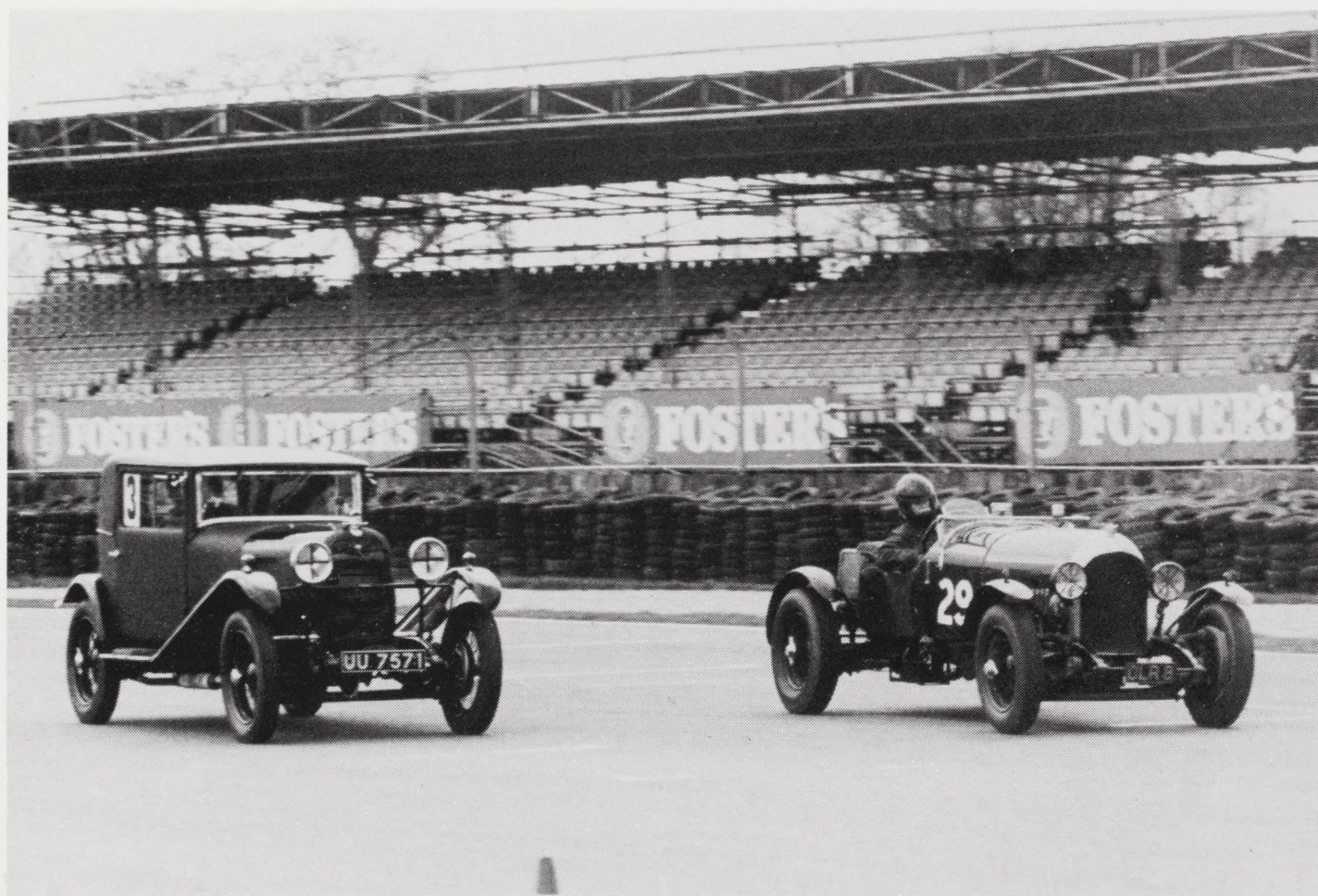
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When not attending to Club affairs, Bryan Hyett finds time to serve on his local council. He was recently Chairman of Wombourne Village Council and here he attends an event in Richard McCann's 3 1/2 litre.



Roger Firth enjoying himself in his Close Coupled 2 litre saloon at this years VSCC Pomeroy Trophy Meeting.

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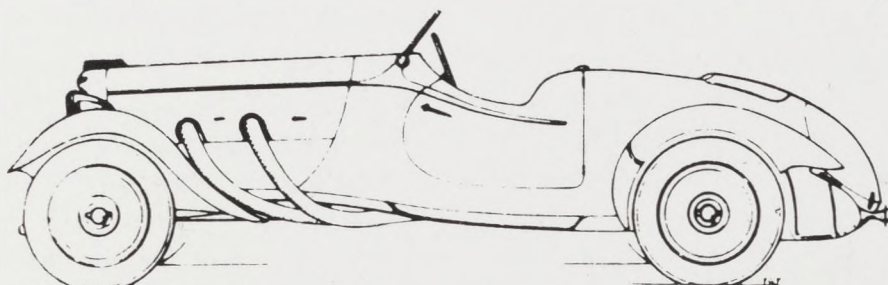
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by a knowledgeable enthusiast in the car park of the Kings Head, Chigwell.

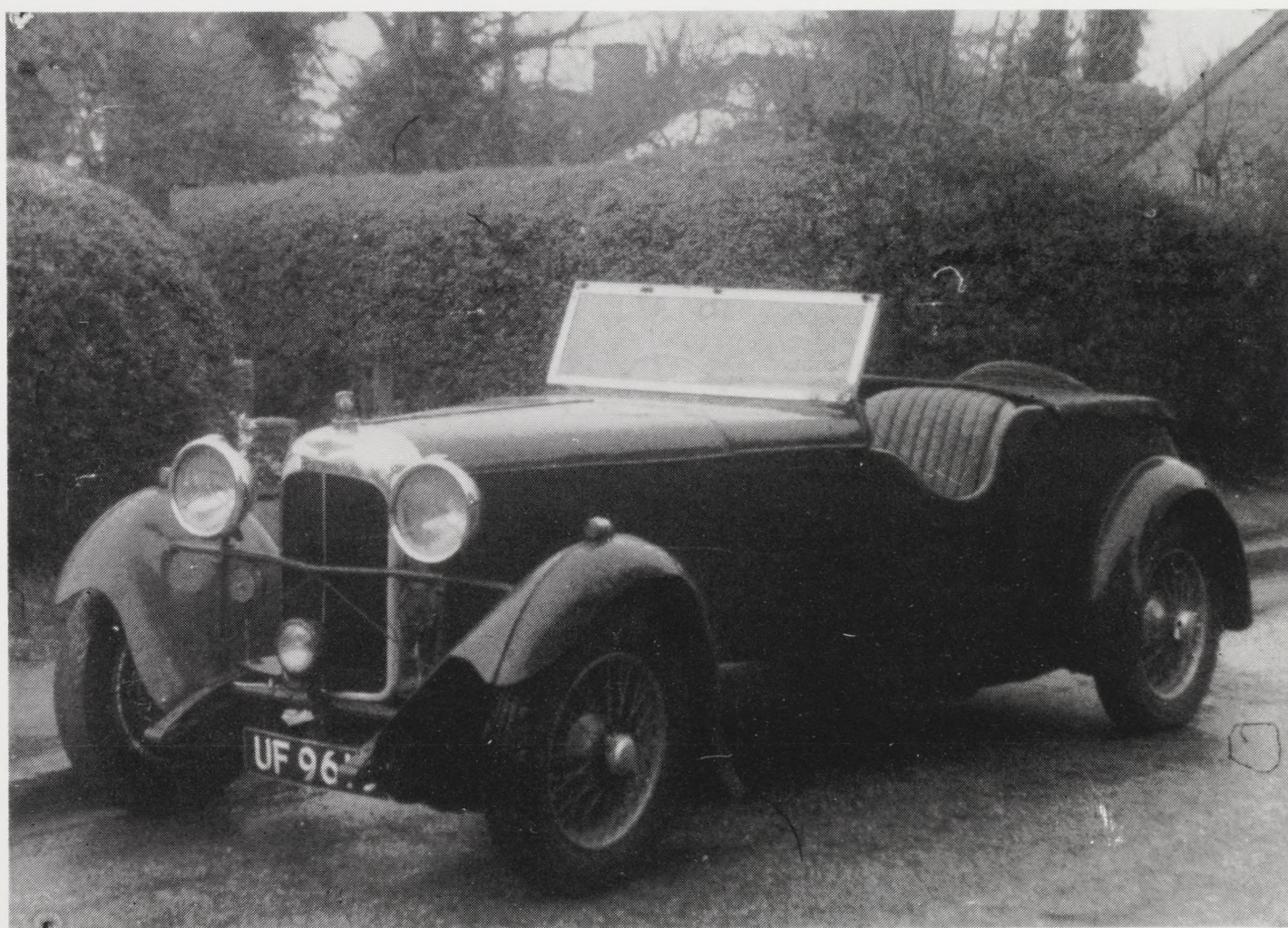
The first decision was "Let's start the engine!". After much struggling, the rusty plugs were removed, cleaned, adjusted and replaced. The dipstick showed the sump to be at least half-full of black sludge. We plugged the lower radiator hose and filled the block with hot water through the top hose. My TR2 battery was borrowed, connected up, the button pressed and the starter turned over. However, there was no spark at all from the magneto, which at that time was a piece of equipment which was a total mystery to me. However, advice from various quarters was to put it in a warm oven overnight, so this was the approach. The contacts were cleaned and after this attention, sure enough we had a spark.

After filling the carburettor float chambers with petrol we tried the starter again. The engine coughed, backfired several times and lo! and behold burst into

life with a thunderous noise through the holes in the corroded exhaust, and with an ejection of dust, lumps of carbon, cobwebs and black smoke. We succeeded in driving up and down outside the garage a few times, and proved that all the gears functioned.

Further examination of our purchase revealed the frightening amount of work needed to be done, but we decided to do the minimum possible to make the vehicle roadworthy. The radiator was the first problem – it had clearly been removed because it leaked like a sieve. An old Vauxhall radiator was obtained from a scrapyard and grafted into the original Lagonda radiator shell. The crankcase had several ominous sheet steel patches screwed on, obviously to cover up cracks and holes. Clearly a broken rod or some other disaster had affected the engine at sometime in its life.

The work to get it on the road followed the usual routine of much degreasing,



UF9616 pictured in 1960.

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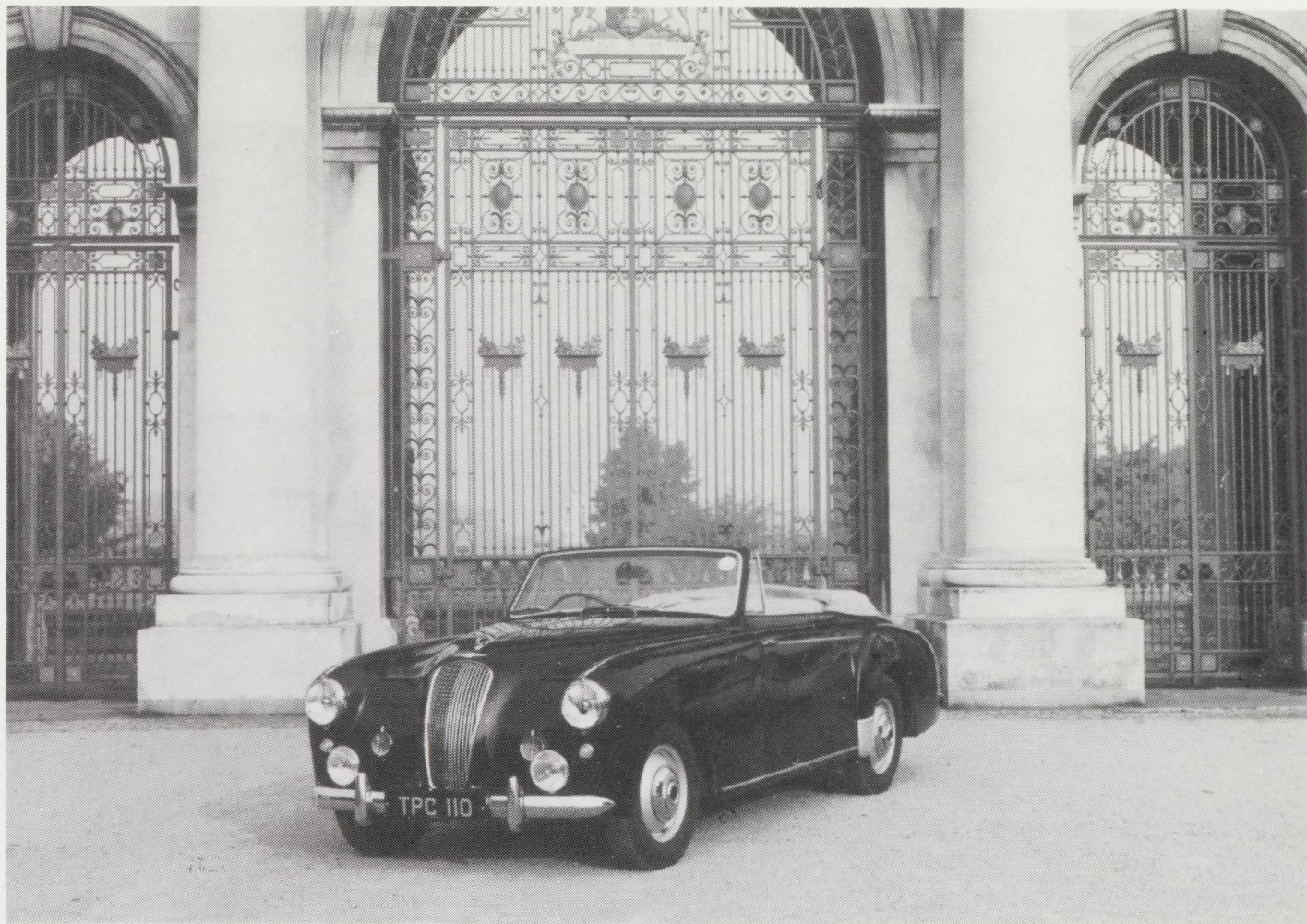
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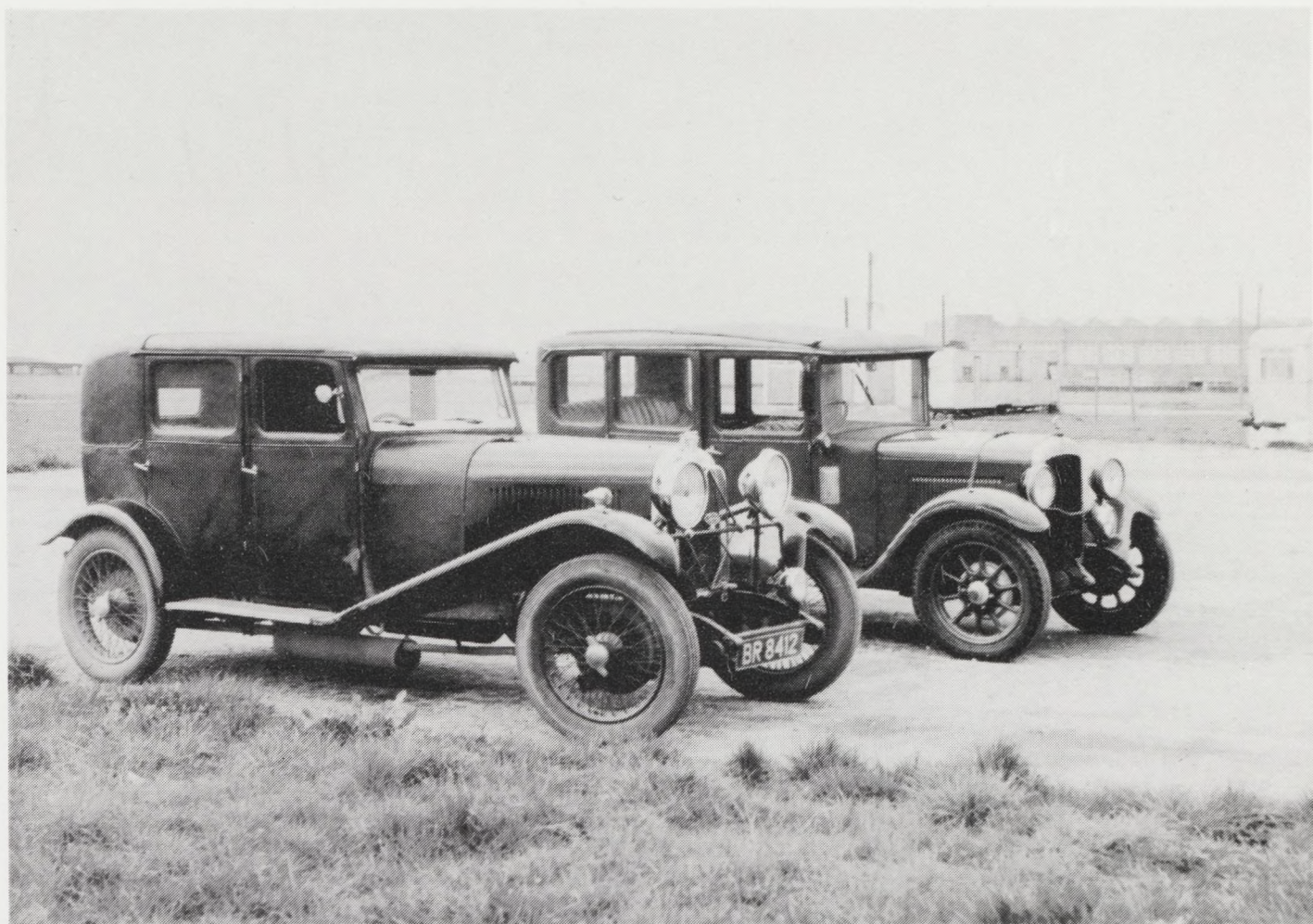
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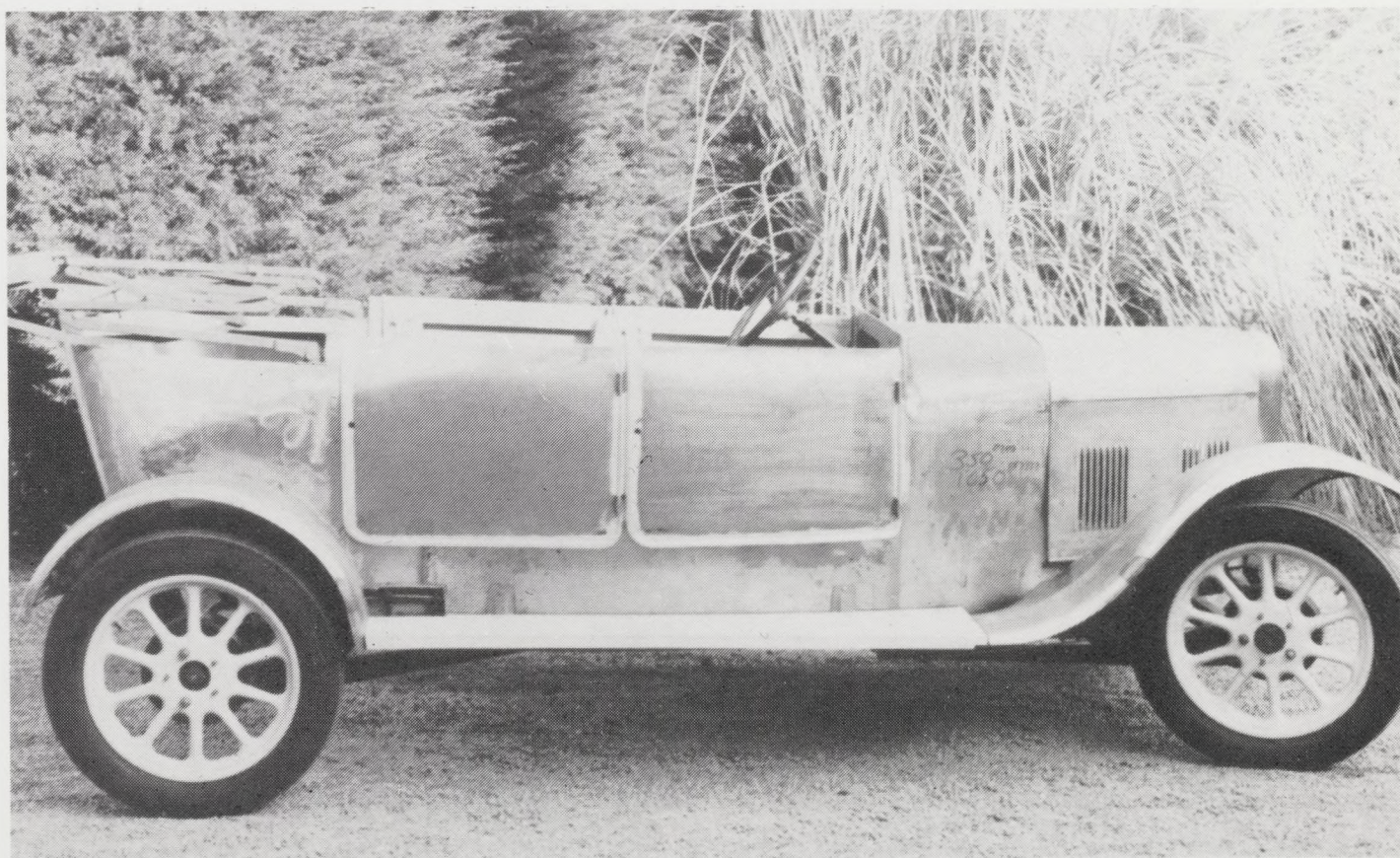
Roger Wheldon sent this fine picture of a DB 3 litre tourer.



A. J. Wade's 3 1/2 litre saloon, see page 38.



BR8412 when Ken Painter owned it, see letter opposite.



Non-member, Gordon Rider's 12/24 in New Zealand. See letter on page 33.

