



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
LAGONDA CLUB

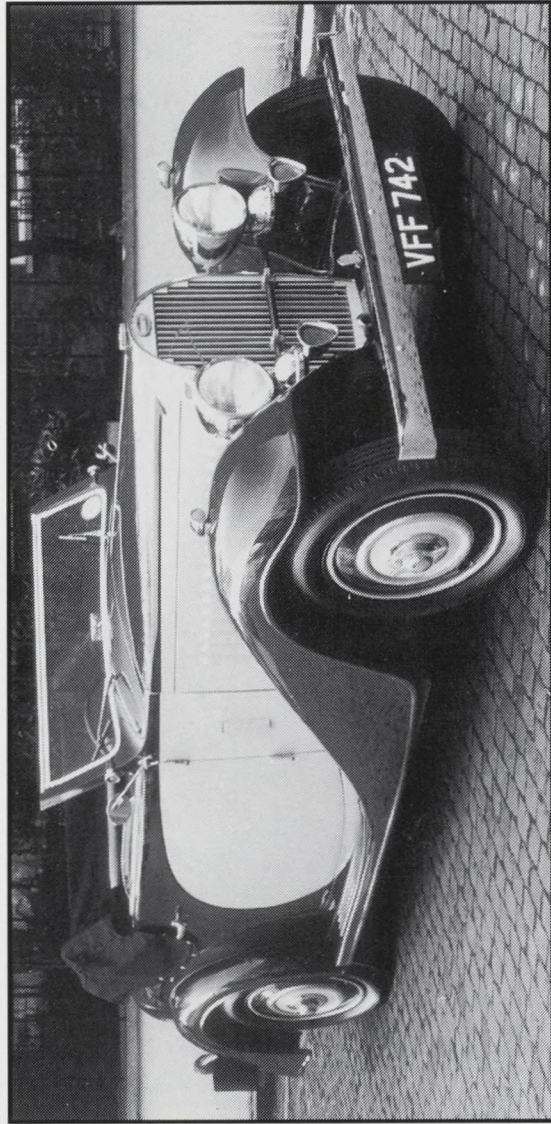
Number 169

Summer 1996

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1964	Aston Martin DB4GT			1955	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing
1922	Bentley 3 Litre Speed Model Tourer by Cadogan	1955	Bentley S1 Continental DHC by Park Ward, (power steering)	1958	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster
1930	Bentley Speed Six Open Tourer by Corsica	1926	Bugatti Type 37A Grand Prix	1961	Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster
1934	Bentley 3 1/2 Litre DHC by Park Ward	1935	Bugatti Type 57 Stelvio Drop Head Coupe	1931	MG J/C-Type Supercharged
1935	Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Cutaway door Tourer by VandenPlas	1935	Bugatti Type 57C Supercharged Stelvio drophead coupe	1922	Rolls-Royce 40/50 Silver Ghost, Brewster Phaeton
1935	Bentley 3 1/2 Litre Sedan	1932	Delage D6 Faux Cabriolet	1927	Rolls-Royce Phantom I Playboy Roadster
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MAGAZINE
Issue No. 169
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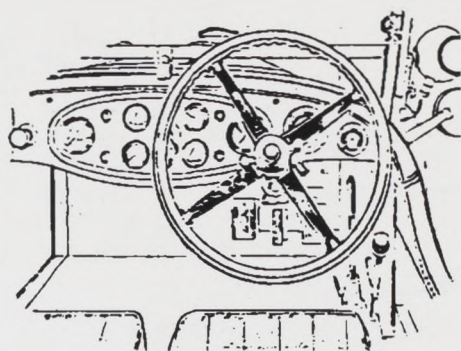
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FRONT COVER

Richard Neal stands beside Hugh Dixon Carr's LG45 Rapide on the day it was delivered, see the article on page 9.

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From the Driving Seat



AS YOU ALL KNOW, we have been shocked and saddened to learn of the death of James Crocker, our President for so long and a true friend to all who knew him.

News of his death came too late to get a proper obituary in this edition of the magazine, so that will be featured in the Autumn edition. Our condolences go to his family at this sad time.

Although he never knew it at the time, James played a pivotal role in persuading me to become a Lagonda owner. I was a young serviceman in Cyprus when I went with friends to see the film "Chase a Crooked Shadow", which featured James' lovely LG 45 Rapide. I had never seen, or even imagined such a beautiful car and from that moment on I was determined to become a Lagonda owner. The effect of that first sighting was so powerful that I have very little memory of the film's plot, or even of its stars, but I can

remember almost every detail of the car. I have yet to own - or even sit in - an LG 45 Rapide, but the desire to own one is as strong now as it was in those far off days.

I first met the man himself when he presented me with the trophy for winning the Yorkshire Treasure Hunt, not in a Lagonda, but in a side valve Morris Minor. That trophy remains the only one I have ever won in the Club. The friendship we formed then survived my selling him AHN 730, the Rapier he campaigned so successfully for many years. It was nothing like as good as I believed it to be and its transformation from decrepit Abbott tourer to race winning special was remarkably rapid. Over the past five years we have competed against each other with great good humour, but never giving or expecting any quarter from either party. Goodbye James, I'm going to miss you.

K.P.P.

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Reflections

WHEN YOU SIT on the starting line before your race at Silverstone a huge cocktail of emotions enter your brain. For most of us who normally only think of one thing at a time, this can be quite a shock!

It requires a huge effort to banish them and concentrate on the controls of the Lagonda. It is particularly important to banish that nasty little fellow who questions what the hell you are doing here and maybe you're about to get hurt - or even worse, the car might get hurt! The noise is indescribable and the fumes from tens of engines flat out but stationary make it hard to breathe.

Oops, there goes the two minute hooter with the sign raised aloft and you can be sure the one minute comes very quickly. Retard the ignition and press the starter. The only indication is the rev counter as the noise and vibration all around make it impossible to "feel" the car start. Check both magnetos, advance ignition, water nice and hot, oil pressure a good 60 pounds.

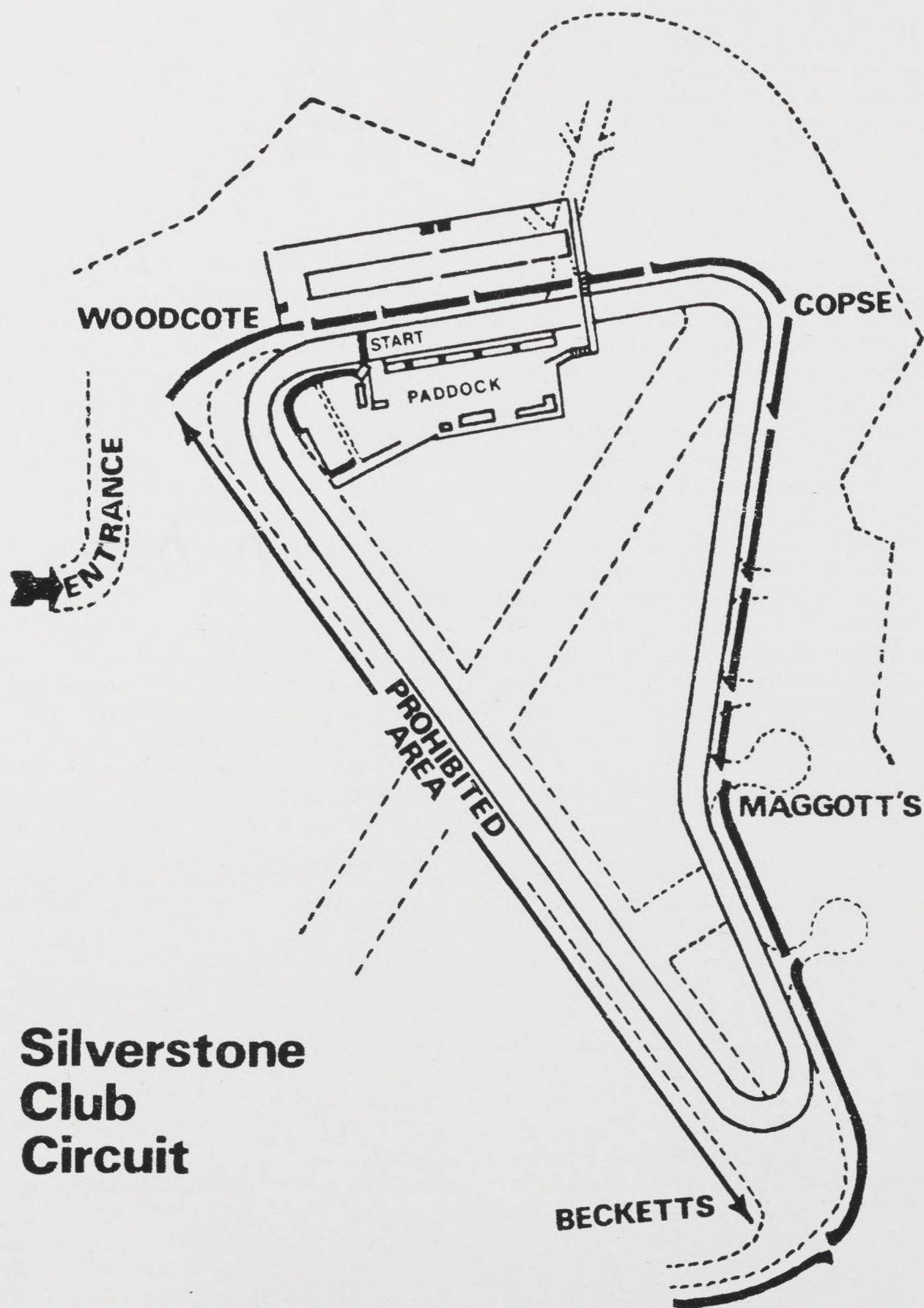
Already the same slight figure of that splendid fellow who starts all the races has appeared with his Union Jack. Glance around at the competition, give a confident wave to fan club of two at the barrier and we're ready for "off". Oops, nearly forgot to lower the goggles. Depress the clutch pedal and engage first gear on the superb, unbreakable Alvis gearbox. Grasp the beautiful fly-off handbrake and feel the click as the pawl disengages, pull it hard to hold the car steady. Gently depress the throttle and watch the rev counter rise to 3,500 r.p.m. and hold

The slight fellow raises the flag for a millisecond and drops it, simultaneously let go of the hand brake and release the clutch. The huge momentum of the Meadows crankshaft, damper and flywheel is transmitted through the twelve massive springs in the Borg and Beck clutch to the splendid Dunlop racing tyres and the "White car" leaps forward like a shot from a catapult. Just about the only thing I can be sure of is a good start in a race. Almost immediately bang the gear lever through the uncomplaining synchromesh into second and hold until 4,000 r.p.m. comes up, then whop into third as Copse corner approaches and the competition bunches up alarmingly.

Don't bottle out now... leave the brakes until the last second and, yes, yes, we're through ahead of the pack into Maggots curve now, we feel invincible as the others fall back and I can already see the limit man on the straight, no problem.

The date is August 23rd 1980, one of those perfect summer days that blessed the Bentley Driver's Club Silverstone meetings, so free of petty officialdom and always great sport. The Club circuit is at its best and still free of all the wretched twists and turns that have spoilt it recently.

The formidable Becketts now approaches nearly a 180 degree hairpin which can transform the White car into a slithering whale if I'm not very careful, but what's this? A small blue Rapier catching me as I brake and change down into third all at the same time, with the poor Meadows revving to 4,500 as the



**Silverstone
Club
Circuit**

clutch bites. Gosh, it's jolly James, the Club President, actually trying to get past. Oh well, might as well let him through in a gentlemanly way. After all, it will only be for a moment, because the straight is coming up and he's only got 1200 cc's under the bonnet and I've got 4500 cc's. As W.O.Bentley said, there is no substitute for litres.

Now that Becketts is navigated, it's time to reel him in, as they say. Oh splendid, the Meadows roars up to 4000 and whop into top, soon the speedo approaches the magic 100 m.p.h. as we whizz past the Presidential Rapier and under the Dunlop Bridge. Oh crumbs, left the braking a bit late for Woodcote and we slide with one wheel on the grass to the ignominious cheers of the crowd.

Well, of course, he got past on the inside and over the line to start lap two ahead of me, I made a mistake didn't I? Neck and neck we raced towards Copse and up through Maggots again and as he nipped inside us a Becketts I could actually see the famous Crocker grin spreading from ear to ear and I felt myself grinning back, this was **fun** and there were no other cars around to spoil our play!

Yes, W.O.'s theory did work again on the straight, but if I braked early he

whizzed past me again into Woodcote and if I left it late he got me again later into the corner. For eight glorious laps we battled neck and neck, both cars and drivers on top form, the sun shone, the crowd cheered and for those brief minutes the world stood still.

Sure enough, as the chequered flag flashed past, we were still locked together, with not 0.1 of a second between us from the start to the finish of the race of a lifetime. Many pints were consumed during the rest of the day, as we recounted each moment and that precious bond of friendship was formed which has stood the test of time over the years.

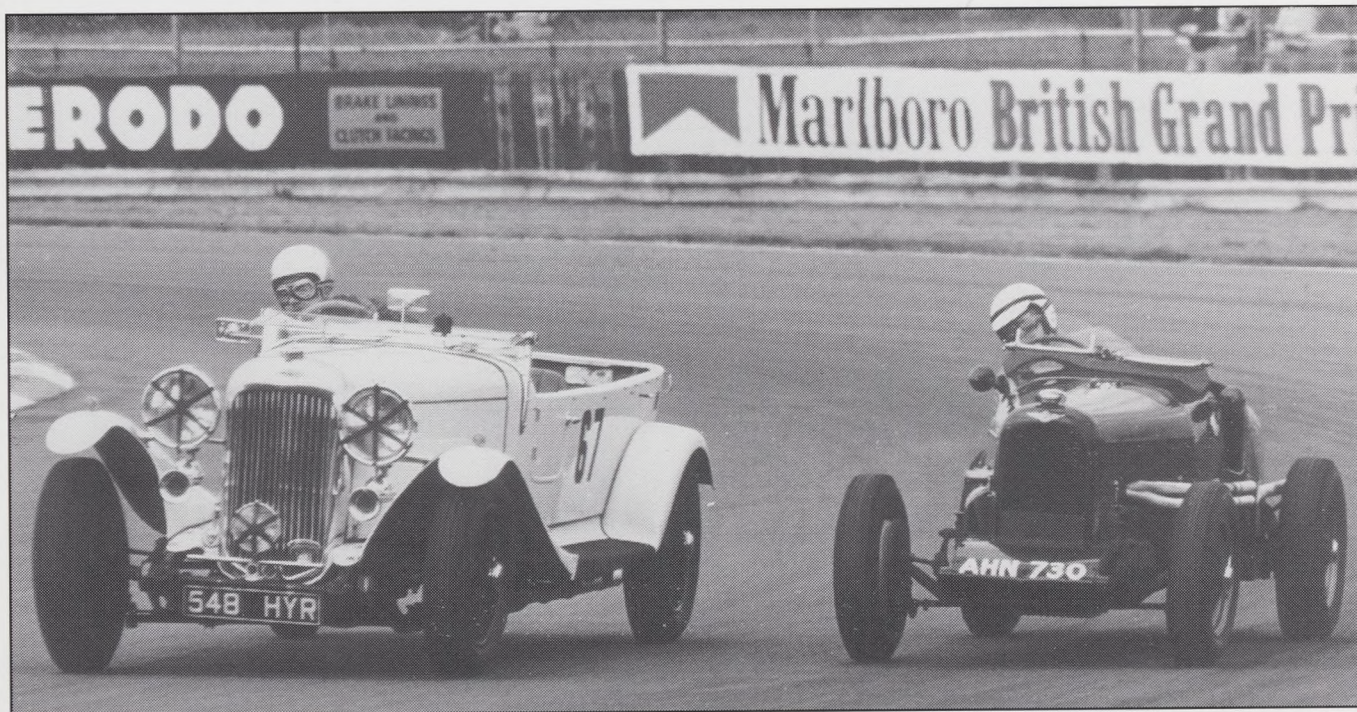


Many times again James and I met in friendly competition and, more recently, when I have found myself Chairman of our Club, I have come to rely on his wise and fatherly counsel.

Suddenly, without warning, a cruel, but mercifully swift illness has claimed his life and he is torn from our midst.

Thank you for being such a wonderful and inspirational presence in our movement, your memory will live on and guide us.

DRH



James and David at play, Silverstone 23rd August 1980.

Photo: Harold Barker

IMPORTANT NEWS
for owners of Lagondas
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A new product is available to bring your fabric hood and tonneau cover back to their original condition.

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My 16/80 Lagonda has been treated and the results are astonishing. It took half an hour with a new 2 inch paint brush.

Want to know more?

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A Tribute to Hugh Dixon Carr

MANY OF US WHO ARE FIT and well can in no way envisage having to live with the problems associated with polio and I am sure that if we tried to take ourselves back in time to around 1936/7 we would never have contemplated purchasing the most exotic sports car of the day in the way of an LG45 "Rapide".

Well, this did happen. Hugh Dixon Carr of Low Wood, Ben Rhydding, Ilkley, Yorkshire, contacted polio at the age of 16 and, whilst his doctor presented him with the fastest thing on four wheels he considered suitable, a wheel chair, he was determined not to accept this for the rest of his life. At the age of 43 and, so that he could have some pleasure out of life, he ordered from Lagonda's, via Glover Brothers' Garage, Ilkley, his LG45 "Rapide". Slight modifications to standard were carried out as he was unable to use his right leg. M45 hand controls were fitted, as were special tilting seats which also fold flat, the brake lights were connected to the handbrake (as he could not work the foot brake). Everything else was standard, except for no inside door handle on the driver's side (he couldn't use this door) and no tonneau cover!

Hugh Dixon Carr, or "Chukka" as he was known to his family, was left so paralysed that it was considered he would never stand, let alone walk again. His own considerable efforts brought much improvement, although he needed the support of two sticks. It is clear that he enjoyed the Rapide, within the first 15 months he had covered a total of 29,162 miles and, within 23 months this had increased to 40,566 miles. On one occasion he took the car to Norway, during his ownership over some 39 years it was on the road for 19 years and covered 74,568 miles.

Without doubt, Hugh coveted the Rapide and I understand that, from the time of delivery until his death, he was virtually the only person to drive it. To his annoyance, his illness took its toll and, for the last 15 years of his life, the Rapide stood in his heated garage, with the engine being regularly turned over and the bodywork cleaned once a week.

Following his death, the Rapide was removed to Glovers at Ilkley, it then passed to a dealer, Richard Newsome at Keighley, from where I purchased it on 1st September 1976. Certain cosmetic work had to be undertaken, but two weeks later I was able to take the Rapide to the Lagonda Club 1976 A.G.M. Over the following winter I completed the work required and, in fact, have done very little since, apart from general servicing.

Some time later, Rowland Hill, one of our members, informed me that he remembered my Rapide very well as he lived in Ilkley and knew the previous owner. Rowland advised me to contact David Glover at Glover's Garage, Ilkley, as he had supplied it new as sub-agents for Central Garage, Bradford and subsequently looked after it for several years. Rowland kindly contacted David Glover and, as a result, I went along with the Rapide to meet him. This was my first real contact covering the car's history and he confirmed many points. Some doubts had been expressed by a certain knowledgeable gentleman Rapide owner up north that it would have been its present colour originally, but David Glover confirmed that it was correct.

The original particulars of order showed body, wings and chassis to be Belco Ivory 284143, black wheels, upholstery Celestra, to match Connolly's V.M. crushed grain Luxor and also confirmed that the special seats, hand

controls, door handle and brake lights were quite original. He then told me that he thought that, somewhere in the building, were the service records covering his work on the Rapide. This was too good to be true, but my luck was in. Two weeks later he sold the garage, which, I am sure, would have meant the end of the records he had stored away. He was also of help to me in putting me in touch with Hugh Dixon Carr's nephew in Leeds, but this fell on stony ground.

Things go very well with the car, it is admired wherever it goes and is a dream to drive.

Postscript:

What, I ask you, can be better than travelling along those lovely shropshire roads on a nice summer morning? I noticed that I was very low on petrol, I didn't want to chance the reserve tap and risk causing problems with the cork gasket, so I pulled into the next petrol station, which was just south of Hinstock on the A 41. A full topping up normally takes around eight minutes and somewhere before this point a car pulled alongside me. Out got a man, who looked at my car with absolute amazement, after a while he told me that he had passed his driving test in the Rapide on his 17th

birthday. Yes, I thought, pull the other one mate. but after some searching questions this appeared to be true and I entered into some quite long correspondence, following this chance meeting with Richard Neal.

Hugh Dixon Carr was a master at Bedford School, where Richard Neal was a pupil. Carr's family home was in Ilkley and he had become very friendly with Richard's mother and father. On 27th july 1937 they all waited with excitement at Bedford School for the Rapide to be delivered. Richard drove the car on a number of occasions before his 17th birthday and passed his test on his 17th birthday in it. Several holidays were taken in the Rapide, mostly to Scotland and one to Norway. He also owned another Lagonda, YG 7700, a 3 litre Z.11011, engine number 2760 which, I understand, is now owned by Mr Skreiner from Vienna. If he contacts me I can supply some photographs of the car in use before the war.

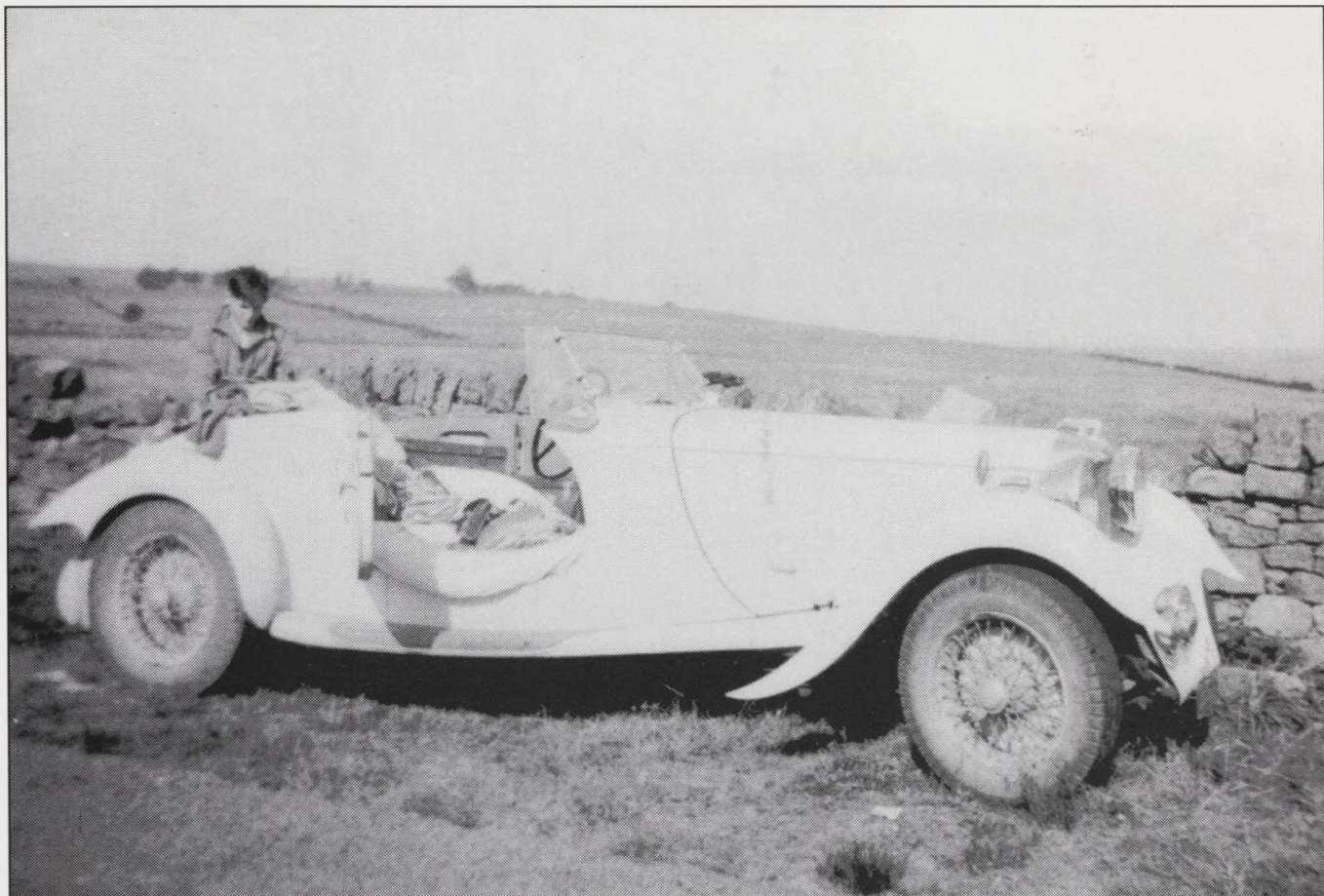
Correction to previous article in Magazine 133, summer 1987:

Car supplied by Bransome and Robertson to Central Garages/ Glover Brothers. 18th Rapide to be made.

Roger Firth



Hugh Dixon Carr touring Scotland.



BYG on Great North Road.



Hugh Dixon Carr and BYG 7.

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| <p>4 Do you receive discounts on European cover, publications and signs services? <input type="checkbox"/> YES or NO?</p> | <p>8 Does your membership cover your car for any authorised driver, and you, whatever car you and your spouse are travelling in, as driver or passenger? <input type="checkbox"/> YES or NO?</p> |

If your answer is YES to all these questions you must already be enjoying the privileges of RAC Associated Club membership.

For immediate cover or further information telephone 0345 41 41 51 (weekdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m.)

Members transferring from other motoring organisations are exempt from the £10 joining fee.

Contact the Lagonda Club Secretary for details

Please note: to qualify for this offer you must be

- 1. A member of an RACMSA Recognised Club or*
- 2. An RACMSA licence holder or*
- 3. An RACMSA Official.*



THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

Le Jog - ADX56 - and US.

Dec 2nd to Dec 5th 1995

I THINK IT WAS at the Coy's meeting at Silverstone in 1995 that the pamphlet on LE JOG arrived on AXD's windscreen under a wiper blade. AXD56 is a green 1934 M45 tourer. It is a one family car, bought and run by T.C.Mann until 1988, when I took over the maintenance and running of this magnificent machine.

My elder son, James, made the decision. "I think this will be a **real** Adventure." he said. I agreed, trying to ban the thought of December driving from my mind, plus the real concern about night legs (I fall asleep at the drop of a hat). In fact, not for the first time, all the things I worried about did not concern us and the ones that either I did not check, or did not concern me gave us the **real** test.

After about two months of preparation, James as co-driver and I set off on 30th November from near Eastbourne. We did about 240 miles and stayed near Plymouth with friends, then on to Lands End the next day to collect final instructions for the Trial. We had decided to run in the Touring Trial, which cuts out test and control sections, but included all the check points within timed stages. If we achieved at check points, then we would gain the blue riband!

We started at about 8 a.m. Saturday 2nd December, with a Day-Night-Day first leg in front of us, arriving at Edinburgh for a night stop on 3rd December.

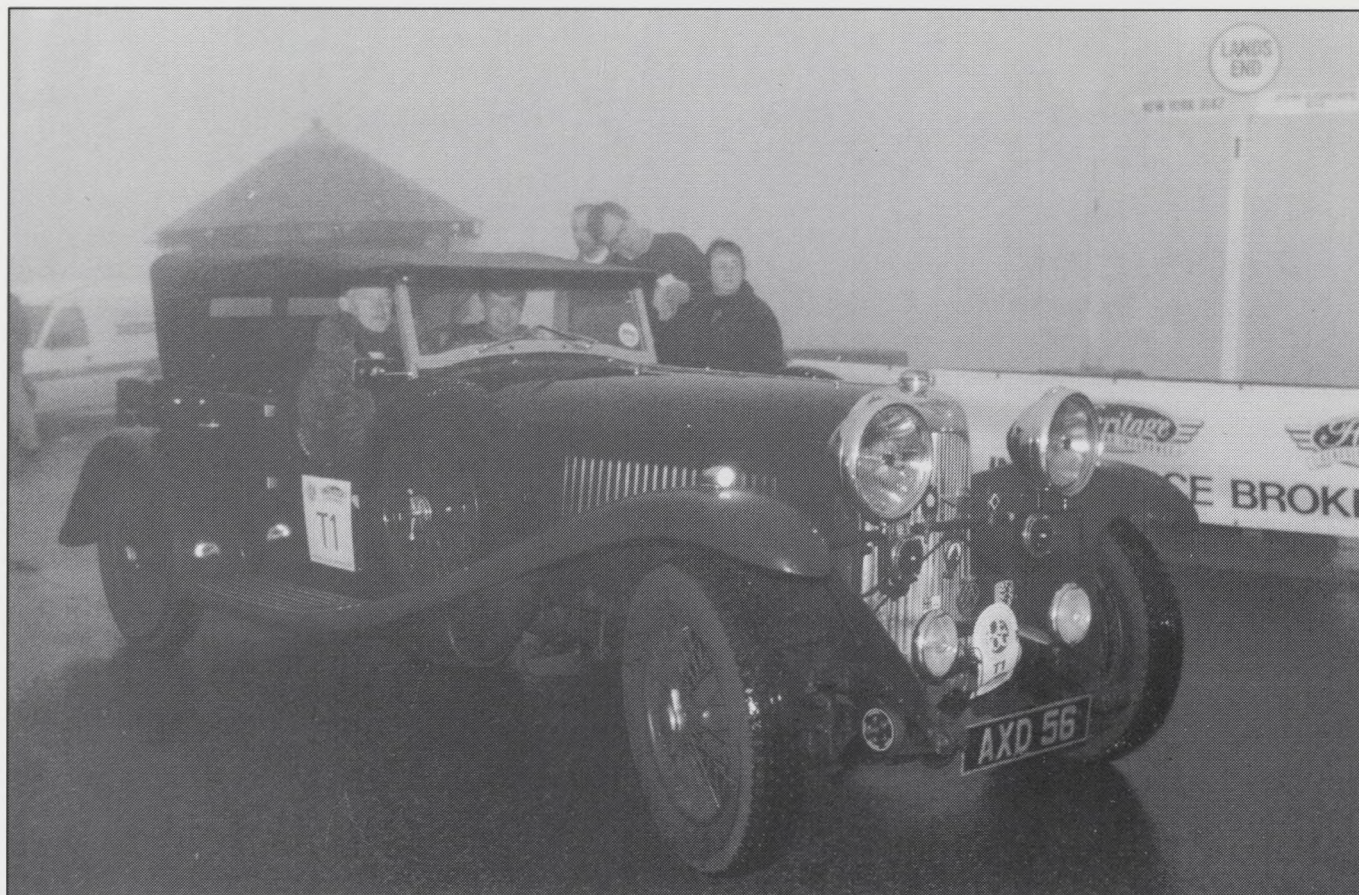
The first day went well and then on the first night leg, at about 10.30 at night, somewhere in Wales, the dreaded red light came on. The charging system was not working as it should and the first major test of driver and navigator began. We reasoned that it was not the coil, we were still firing perfectly, so it must be the regulator or the dynamo. We started

with the regulator and, by using a piece of foam, given by a knowledgeable pair of competitors, got the contacts to close rather better. This got us several hundred miles.

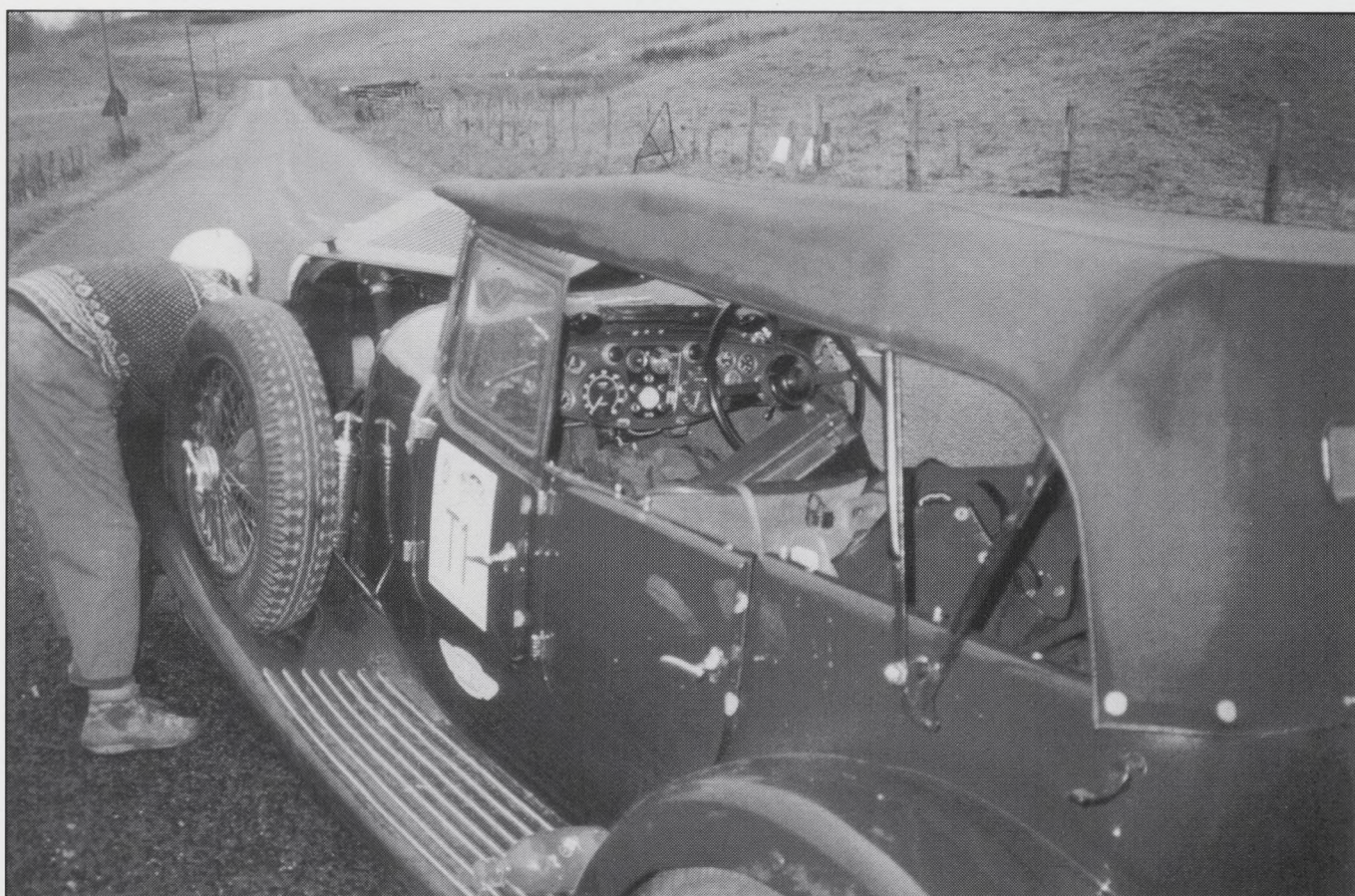
Shortly after our breakfast stop at Charnock Richard Services, near Preston, we found that the dynamo brushes were the real cause of our problems, they were at best, about a third of their correct size. James did everything he could think of to keep the dynamo going and 40 miles south of Edinburgh, with the support of two other cars, rebuilt part of the brush that was now wearing rather badly.

After a well needed night's rest in Edinburgh and a jump start, we were off again. We got as far as Grantown on Spey before the brushes fell out altogether and we limped into the town on mag only. When we stopped at the check point we had no other choice but to find and fit new brushes. We then had the most amazing piece of luck. I asked for any local person who could help as the RAC were unable to come up with anything and was told that the local AA man was also an old car enthusiast. At 8.30 p.m. on the Monday night, Allen Calder, the AA man found a Jeep dynamo in his workshop and took out the brushes, which we pared down to fit. One and a half hours later, after charging up the batteries and a cup of tea, all provided by Allen, we set off for Inverness and made the checkpoint by 20 minutes.

We then had a beautiful night drive, with a star-lit and moon-lit sky, on to John O Groats at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday 5th December, 1347 miles from Land's End. It seemed to James and me that the car was testing **our** skill and, if we were resourceful enough, then we would be able to keep the car going. We had also established that our new brushes only enabled us to charge the batteries over 2,000 revs.



The Start. 8.00am on 2nd December 1995 at Land's End.



James fixing the dynamo – again – 3rd December 1995.

It was time to face the drive home. I bought a standby battery to ensure that the engine would start, the original batteries had been flattened at least five times by this stage. All went well until we reached Leyburn in Yorkshire, after staying in Pitlochry the previous night. Air was entering the petrol line via the Ki-Gass and this was affecting the petrol/air mix, so we isolated the Ki-Gass and with a new co-driver, John Blake, headed for Cambridge, our last night stop before the last leg home.

We stayed with a school friend of mine, Clive Haines, who did not turn a hair when, in order to aid the start in the morning, we took out the engine oil, the standby battery for charging and several sparking plugs, as it was a freezing night. Even with all these dodges, I still needed the RAC to jump-start me for the final day's drive, after that the car ran beautifully and we made it home at 5.15 p.m., ten days after setting off and 2560 miles later. As James had said a long time before, it was to be a **great** adventure and all of us, James, myself and John had known the depths and the heights as we faced up to the various problems which

had developed and, by a mixture of skill, luck and persistence, had solved them sufficiently to drive the car around the British Isles.

The only other Lagonda, an LG45, HLL 534, also made the trip in the reliability trial and won the class, the team coming from Holland. Two Lagondas started and two finished, that's the way it should be.

My overall memories were of many superb cars, particularly the older ones, three 1926 Alvises, a '27 Talbot, a '30 Frazer Nash, the LG 45 and numerous MGs and Healeys. The kindness, consideration and skill shown by the competitors and the back-up crews, one of whom made a silencer after 100 miles and then at our first breakfast stop, chained a Jaguar's back axle back on.

The interest the people showed in LE JOG and the cars was fantastic. In Scotland, near Wick, we met a postman who knew who ran the event and all about the Rally. It was quite the greatest motoring experience I have ever had. Here's to the next one in 1996. Care to come with us?

Richard Mann



The Finish. John O'Groats, 8.30am 5th December 1996.

Wilbur Gunn's Grave

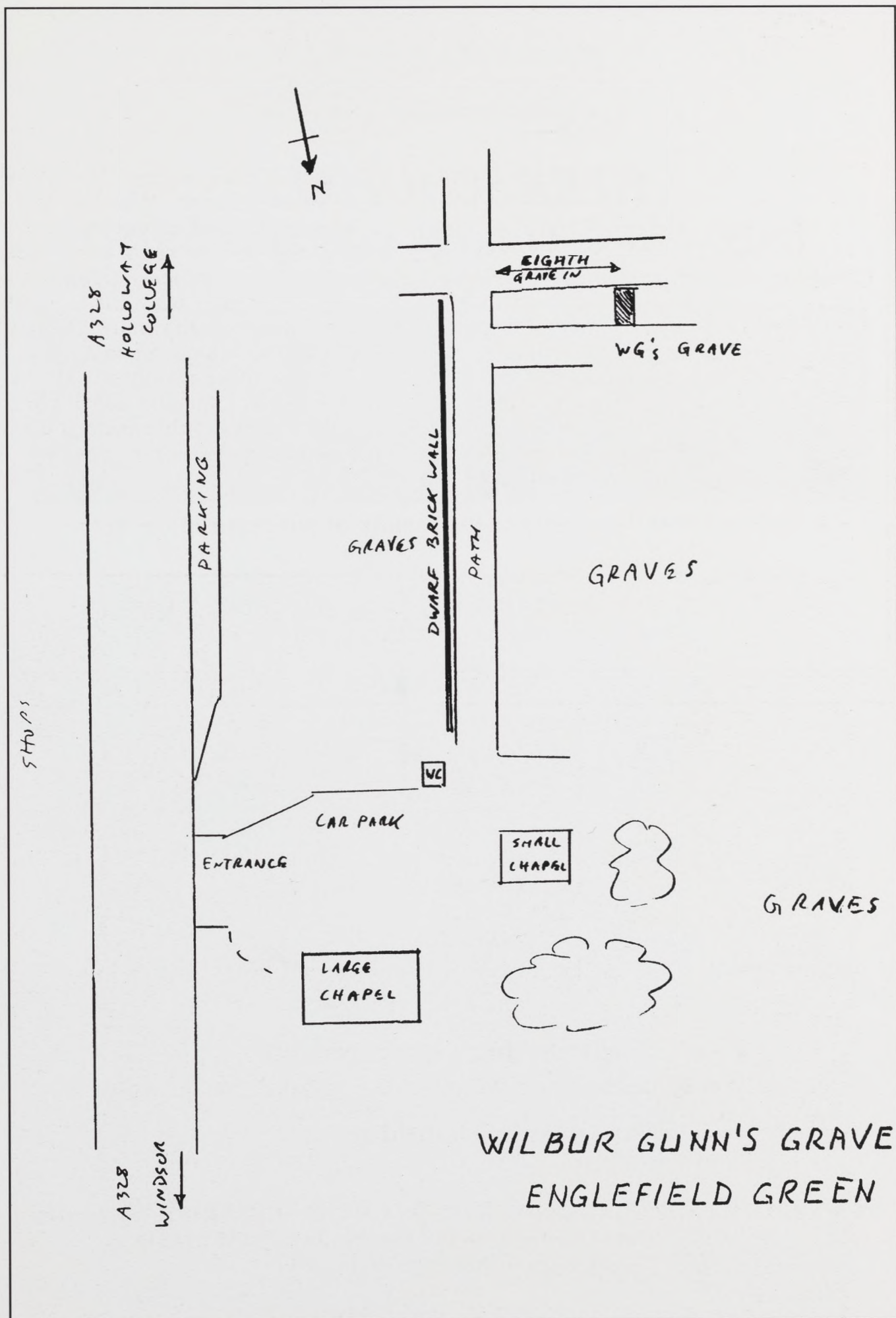
FOLLOWING MY BRIEF note in the Newsletter about employing a man to restore and maintain Wilbur Gunn's grave in Englefield Green Cemetery, I thought members would be interested in the photograph, taken in April. The stonework has been cleaned, the weeds all removed and replaced with new turf and a start made on re-lettering, but this had been temporarily stopped by the weather at the time. Removing the vegetation has exposed a line of lettering that we didn't know was there, right at

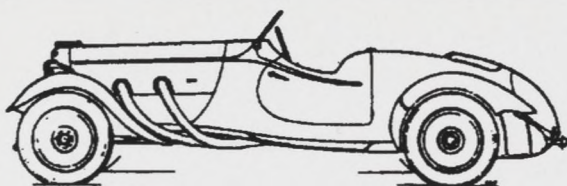
the bottom, and saying "Neither shall there be any more". Whether this was Constance Gunn's regret at their not having children, or some other, deeper, meaning I leave to speculation. I had to go on my knees to read this inscription, which brought an approving glance from an old lady tending a grave nearby.

In case other members want to pay their respects, I attach a sketch plan, not to scale, which should enable you to find it in what is quite a large cemetery.

Arnold Davey

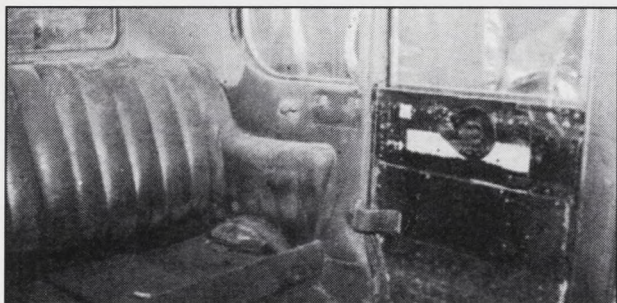






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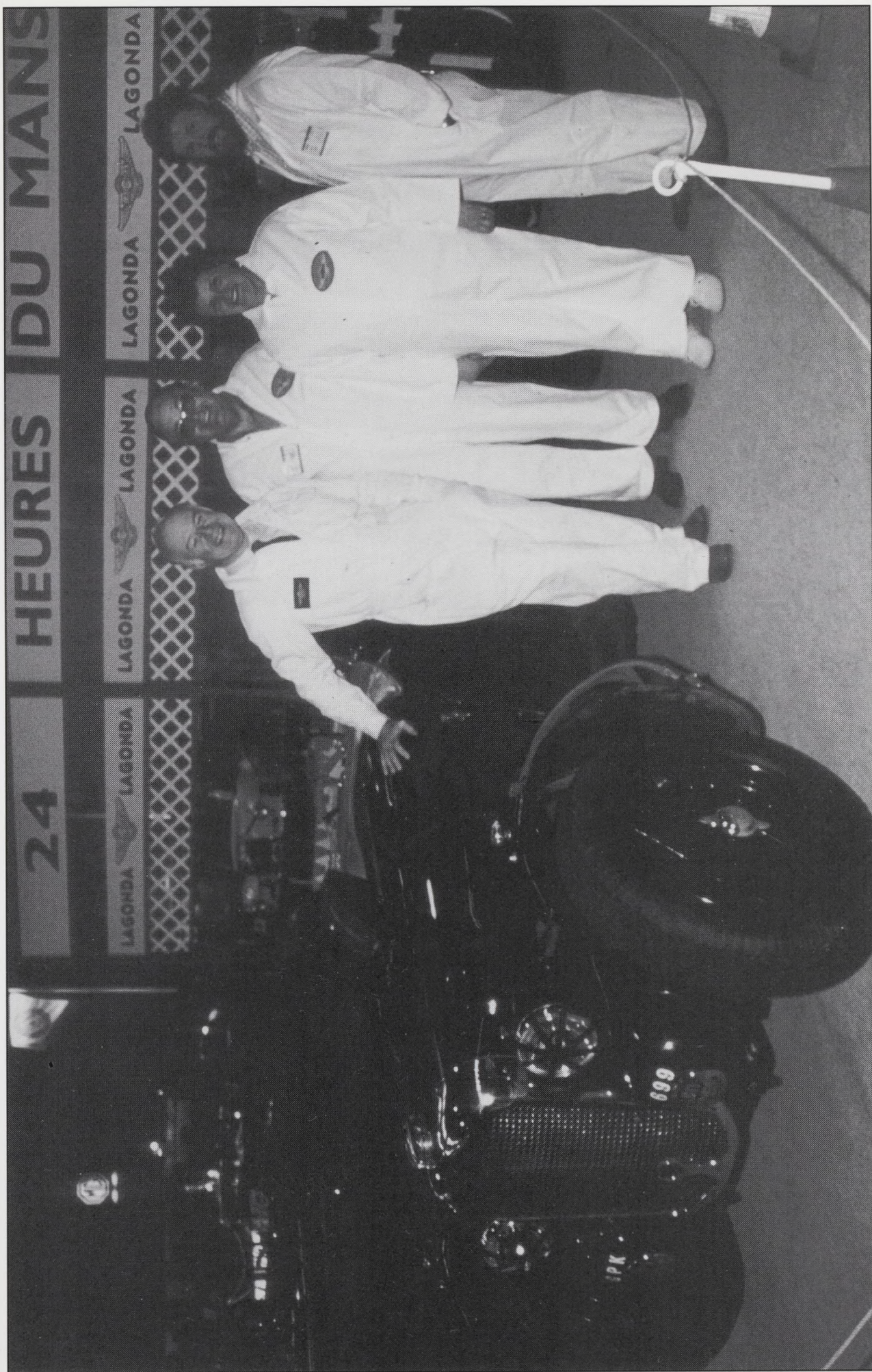
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The Le Mans Theme won three awards and was the best Club Stand at the Show. Congratulations to Tim and the Team!



*Jean Gorjat's lovely V12 DHC at the Essex Motor Show, December 1995.
The car was displayed in a glass case with manikins in period clothing.*

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Derek Rutherford, 1908 - 1996 Obituary

DEREK RUTHERFORD was born in Ireland in 1908 and, from an early age, coaxed motor cycles and old cars to achieve performance well beyond expectations.

He competed in Hill Climbs and road races and was riding mechanic for Maserati in the Ulster TT in the 1920's. With RAG Carburettors and, later, Lagonda, he was in charge of testing and was part of the successful Lagonda team at Le Mans before the war. His knowledge of the Lagonda marque and the people involved, including W.O. Bentley, Malcolm Campbell and most of the BRDC motoring celebrities over a long period was encyclopaedic. He knew all the history of all the Racing circuits, including Brooklands.

After the war, he travelled the

world, working for Bryce, the fuel injection company, spreading the diesel engine "gospel" to power stations and railway utilities.

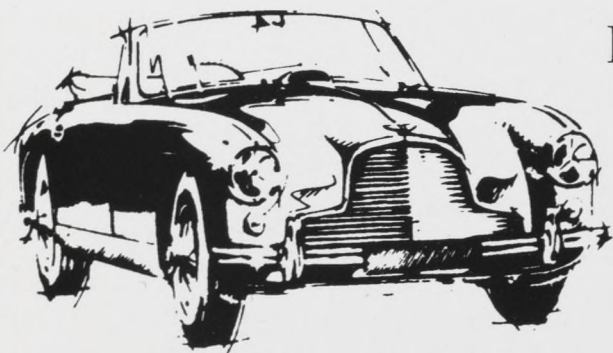
In retirement, he was well known in his Bentley, which he rebuilt, first as a competitor and later as a marshal, at various Bentley, Lagonda and VSCC meetings at Silverstone and elsewhere.

In 1995 he was a prize winner in the Sainsbury "Lagonda Memories" competition.

More details of some of these events may be found in Derek's book, "70 years of Wheels and Engines", which he published just before his death and which is available for £15, including p&p from: GTS, Bond's Mill, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3RG.

Ian Rutherford

ASTON MARTIN - LAGONDA SERVICE



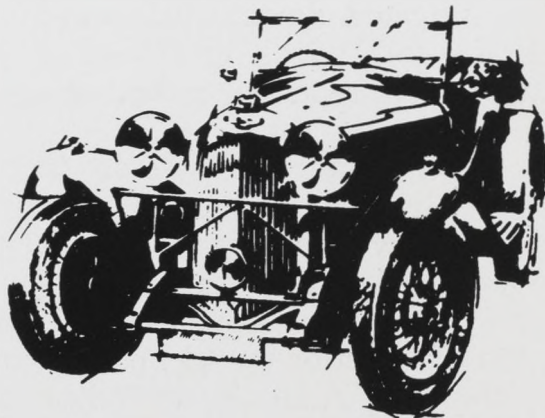
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Derek Rutherford, an Appreciation

IAN RUTHERFORD has sent us an obituary of his father Derek (printed opposite), so there is no need to sketch the outlines of Derek's varied career in engineering, but since first meeting him in 1986, up to his last letter at the end of 1995, enclosing a signed copy of his book, we enjoyed an extensive correspondence, enlivened by meetings at Silverstone and Staines. I have, of course, kept every word and have re-photographed his treasured pictures to add to the Club's archives. Derek was always to be relied upon to answer the sometimes very obscure questions club members ask about matters at Staines and you could always trust his replies. If he didn't know, he would say so and resist the temptation to guess, which so plagues the historian.

He was the last of a once numerous breed, the riding mechanic in first-class racing, having been mechanic to George Eyston in the 1931 T.T., among other events. The engineer in him led him to invent a foolproof system for lap counting, that being one of the mechanic's duties. If, say, it had been arranged to stop for fuel after ten laps, then Derek would get a cocoa tin lid and cut the flange into ten little fingers of metal. Every time they passed the pits he would bend one finger flat and when they had all gone it was time to stop at the pits. This was far more reliable than a complicated device that could easily get pressed twice and was anyway difficult to read in a bouncing and vibrating racing car.

Derek went to Lagonda in April 1936, when the RAG Carburettor Co. folded. He went as a tester in the Service Department and within months was made head tester. With his background in the carburettor world he also got the job of getting Alan Good's Tricar to run

properly, as the factory had agreed to use it in the 1937 Coronation procession around Staines, along with a 12/24 and an LG 45. Gunn's big tricars were meant to be fast sports machines in their day and didn't take too kindly to slow running in a procession whose speed was set by the Wolf Cubs and Brownies marching at the front. The Lagonda finished the day in a cloud of oily steam. Later, in 1939, when the party thrown at Staines to show the Le Mans V12s to the press went on and on and on, whilst the Experimental were getting frantic to get the cars back to finish them, Alan Good asked Derek to create a diversion by getting the tricar out and offering the journalists a ride. This did the trick and Stan Ivermee's lads could nick their cars back and get on with them. Derek confirmed that the tricar was Alan Good's personal property and not the company's. Later still, around 1950, he was responsible for arranging its sale to David Brown for £100.

It was Derek who suggested to the racing team at Le Mans that white blobs on the "tits" of the works V12 would make it easier to distinguish in a night pit stop and he got the job of painting them, which was only finished minutes before the off.

As part of Alan Good's attempt to corner the small diesel market, he bought in 1940 the Bryce fuel injection company and installed it in "Ironbarks" on the other side of Thorpe Road. As car testing was dwindling rapidly, with little servicing and no new production, Derek applied for a job with Bryce, with whom he was to stay for the rest of his career, following them to Gloucestershire when they became part of Lucas. As the job involved quite a bit of travelling, he needed a good car and was able to buy a low chassis 2 litre tourer GF 3575 (OH

9653) which served very well. Shortly afterwards he found in a Chertsey scrapyards one of the six aluminium cylinder heads made for the Double Twelve one year. one of these had been cut up to check the coring, but it has never been clear whether the others were used by the team or not. Derek fitted it to GF and it gave admirable results and didn't wear out rapidly, despite the valves seating directly on the aluminium. For all we know, it may still be on the car, last heard of in Wales in 1968.

Derek tells his Bryce story in his book, so I shan't repeat it here, but this is a good moment to record some of his Lagonda anecdotes that might otherwise be forgotten.

To begin with, the Meadows engines for the LG 45 were installed without being tested, but one day someone found a scrap of paper in the bottom of an engine crate that said something like "Albert, this one is 8% down and we can't find out why. Do you think they'll notice?" After that, every engine was tested on the brake before installation, stripped, re-assembled and then run in on town gas for a number of hours at 1500 rpm. Supervising these tests sent the overtime bills rocketing, so a rig was devised that didn't need anyone to watch it. The throttle was held open by a bit of string and there was a rubber band, cut from an old inner tube, to act as a safety device should the string break, which shut the throttle. The one day some clown rigged it up the wrong way round and, Murphy's Law being what it is, that was the night the string broke. Derek came in early the following morning to an eerie silence and spent the day picking bits of Meadows out of the brickwork and roof and sweeping up the oily mess on the floor. now you know why some engine numbers are missing.

For the 1939 Monte Carlo Rally car, Derek had a 44 gallon tank made up, following the design the Service Dept. had invented to suit a customer who wanted to drive to Nice without

stopping. As the V12 was starting from Tallinn and fuel supplies in that part of the world were dubious, to say the least, this seemed a wise move. They also fitted magic de-ditching gear. Charles Brackenbury, who was the co-driver said he ought to test all this and took Derek with him on a test run that encompassed an astounding number of pubs, in all of which "Brack" was well known. After a great deal of refreshment, Brack suddenly said "We had better test the magic de-ditching gear" and promptly went straight on at the next bend, finishing in the ditch. The M.D-D.G. was then rigged amid a lot of laughter and falling over. Fortunately it worked.

At the outbreak of war, all the unsold cars were parked in a disused hall in Flood St., Chelsea, while the factory was converted into armament production, but in early 1940, in the "phoney war" period, the government gave permission for limited production to start, with the aim of gaining dollars by exporting them. Among the cars that then showed up at the works was the streamlined Lancefield-bodied V12 that was going to have been Good's Bentley crusher, but which everyone had forgotten about. It was still in grey primer and had not been completely finished, but the sales people performed a minor miracle by selling, in wartime, an unfinished car, not properly painted. The buyer was Lord Lovat, who turned up to take delivery clutching a large bottle of champagne and Derek had to move like lightning to stop the noble buyer cracking it across the expensively hand-made nose of the car. After the war, this same car came into the hands of an unsavoury character who had made a fortune out of the war in ways best not examined too closely. He was delighted with the way he had beaten the vendor down on price and rushed home with his prize. He hadn't listened to the explanation of the fly-off handbrake, or anything else, and parked the car outside his hillside house while he hurried in to get his lady friend to come and see his

new toy. When they emerged the car was nowhere to be seen, but was found some time later at the foot of the hill with very modified bodywork. Derek put it down to Divine Intervention.

There are dozens more of these stories and they are all filed under "Old Lags" in the Lagonda Room here. One day, if we ever get to publish a definitive history in ten volumes, perhaps the world can share them. I always encourage the "Old Lags" to write down their memories, but so far, Derek Rutherford is the only

one, if you discount W.O. himself, to have got them to the publication stage. It is a shame that he left it so late, so that by the time it got to proof stage, Derek was too ill to correct it properly and any number of spelling mistakes have slipped through, but this doesn't spoil a fascinating story. We are going to miss him as a reliable source of reference and have to pass our sympathies to Ian and the rest of the family.

Arnold Davey



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Letters

Dear Ken,

I recently acquired a lengthy, but coverless, driver's handbook for the Invicta car, circa 1928, which, of course was fitted with a Meadows engine like that in the Lagonda M45. Some of it is amusing reading and one excerpt about oil pressure I thought you might find space for in "The Lagonda":

OIL PRESSURE FAILURES

Under no circumstances must the car be driven or the engine run if the pressure lubrication system fails, unless the journey be so important as to warrant the almost certain seizure of the big-ends or main bearings.

If this risk must be taken, the sump must be filled up to 1½ inches on the dip stick above the full mark, so that the big-ends will dip into the oil.

If the engine has run some 10,000 miles or more, it is just possible that no harm will be done if the engine is not run fast, and with only very slight throttle opening for a very short distance. If the engine is new the bearings will certainly seize.

If no additional oil can be obtained, the crank case can be filled with water to raise the oil level sufficient to allow the big ends to dip. But if when running thus the pump for any reason starts to work properly again, water will be forced into the bearings with certain consequent disaster, so that the oil pump drive must be disconnected first.

The pump drive is disconnected as follows: With hammer and punch unscrew the plug on the top rear off corner of the crank case. Draw out the bearing - it can be prised up with a screw driver. The pump driving pinion can then be lifted out.

On reaching help the water and oil must be drained out. The engine must be

swilled out after repair with a gallon of clean oil, running two or three miles to ensure a good wash through, the swilling oil removed and the sump filled up with fresh oil.

It must be clearly understood that the above performance is exceedingly risky and disaster must only be courted in conditions of dire necessity.

So there you have it. Neither I, nor Invicta Cars, nor, I presume, the Lagonda Club Ltd, will accept liability should a member undertake such a performance and suffer the consequent disaster!

Yours sincerely

Mike Pilgrim

Dear Ken

I spent some time last year trying to obtain details of cars from our members who were down as "No Return" in the Register. This is the outcome of one of the replies which I found very interesting.

Below is most of a letter (written in September 1995) from our member Gareth Davies, who lives in Westlake Village in California and I thought it might make interesting reading in the Magazine. I am well aware that it is very difficult for overseas members to feel as though they "belong" and this letter goes some way to explain why that is.

Colin Bugler

Dear Mr Bugler,

Thank you for taking the time to write a detailed reply to my somewhat erratic letter of last July. My apologies for the delay in answering the query about my Lagondas but perhaps the following may explain that and, also, why the

Lagondas are neglected. (By the way, I do not claim that it is representative of the entire American Lagonda ownership).

Logistics: Last month I drove my wife 900 miles to El Paso, Texas. She has a Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics, an M.Sc. in Solid State Physics and B.Sc's in Maths and Physics. All of which makes her unemployable in California. Hence, she is now a lecturer at the University of Texas - and flying back home twice a month.

I have the same degrees, but in Metallurgy. After 25 years in the U.S. I consider myself to be very fortunate still to have a job! The difficulty is that the job is located 100 miles each way from house, garage and Lagondas - not your average (British) domestic Lagonda scene!

There are other differences of an environmental nature. The potential penalties for neglecting one's Lagondas can be quite severe. Inspired by your letter, I decided to renew my acquaintanceship with the cars - rather than just sticking my head in the garage occasionally to see if they were still there.

There was a coarse, untidy web spun between a workbench and the right front wing of the 3 litre. The spider was about the size of a fingernail, round, fat and jet black. The distinguishing feature was the red "hour-glass" marking on the stomach; "Black Widow"; once seen, never forgotten. Its counterpart in the LG45 was more firmly ensconced, having spun its web between battery and bulkhead. The bite of a North American Black Widow is rarely fatal, but it can still make a healthy adult very sick for a few days. The moral of this story lies in the fact that Black Widow spiders favour dark, quiet places where they are not disturbed!

To return to our original topic - overseas ownership. Actually, I have met very few Americans who own Lagondas. Not that they are few in number but they are spread out over 3,000 miles or so. For example: Graham Wallis in Palos Verdes counts as a neighbour by U.S. standards. However, he is about 65 miles away,

down two freeways. "Pub Meets" are not really on! On the plus side, the natural American enthusiasm for endeavour appears to spill over into Lagondas (and other vintage/classic cars).

The little that I've seen of U.S. owners suggests that they take it very seriously. The casual Lagonda-oriented encounters that one takes for granted in the U.K. are something to be cherished over here. For example: Your detailed and personal letter (from the Club Secretary) is the equivalent of a blood transfusion in renewing interest in the Club and cars (as was Arnold Davey's a decade ago).

Here, by the way, is one for Arnold. I have long admired his endeavours in researching the "early Wilbur Gunn" history and, also, the Gunn family's non-car activities. Try this one for size, I have a very nice English long case clock of slender "London" form, from circa 1740. The maker is "William Gunn, of Wallingford".....perhaps?!

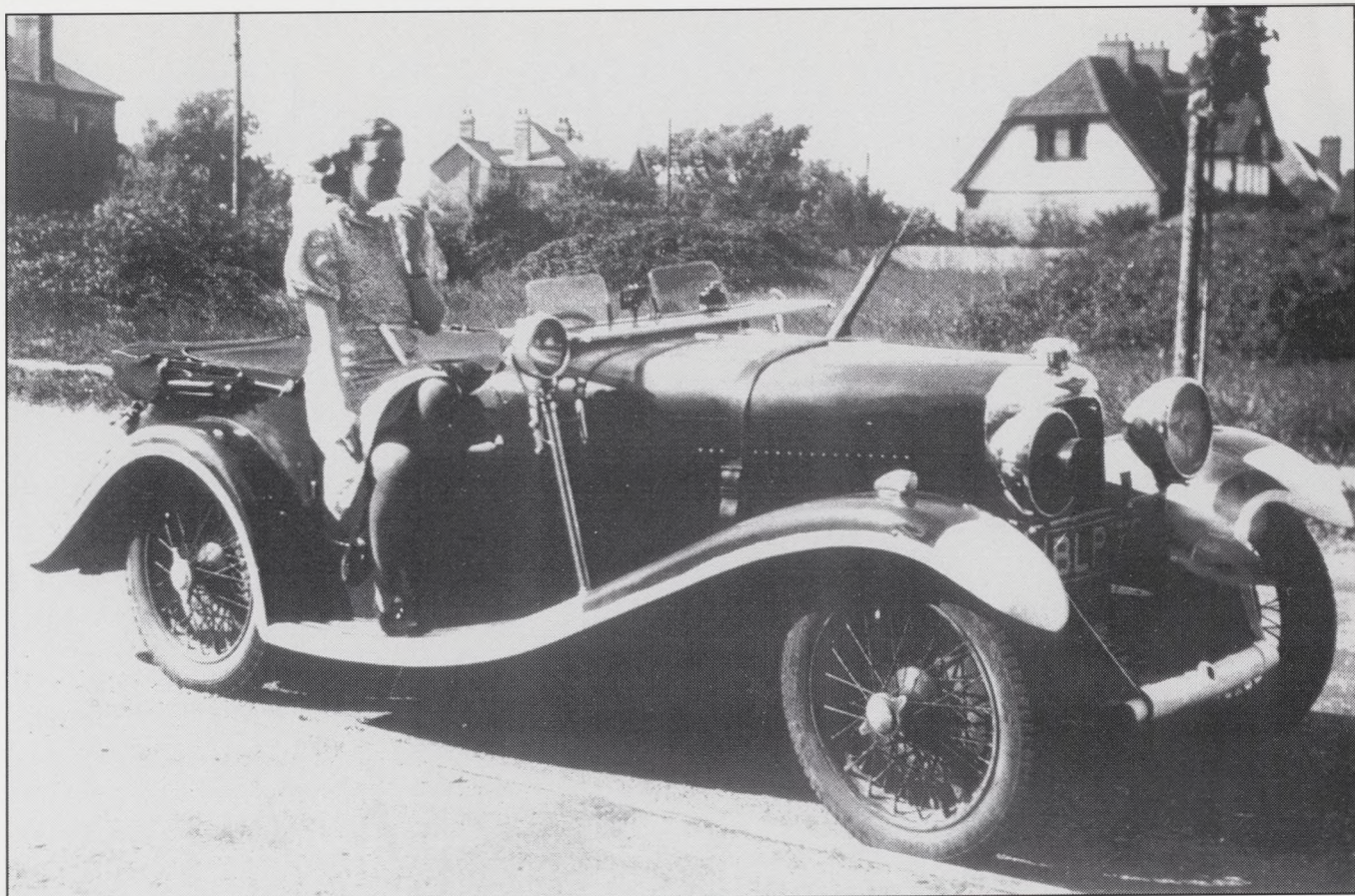
Best wishes and thanks again for your interest

Gareth Davies

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me "The Lagonda", which I read with great interest. I see that in the Winter issue you refer to my good opinion of the Lagonda club, as expressed in a letter to my friend Denis Jenkinson.

This reminds me of when I was a young enthusiast, mad about cars, (which has scarcely worn off) before the war. A friend of my mother's, although not, perhaps, an enthusiast as we understand the term, owned a Lagonda and was attracted by the Lagonda Day at Brooklands to "have a go". He took with him a young nephew. Asked afterwards how he had enjoyed it, he said "Very much", but that the boy had shown no interest, sitting, reading a comic all day. The enquirer then said she knew someone who would have given anything



See "Letters", page 30.





Alan Brown's 65th Birthday Party. We aren't told what was in the box!



Alan cuts his cake. See 'Letters', page 30.

to have gone, whereupon the Lagonda owner said he wished he had known, as he would gladly have taken me.

The purpose of this is to ask if anyone has a programme and would tell me whether the gentleman concerned, a Mr Longden, won anything and what kind of Lagonda he used. I would think the year was either 1929 or 1930. (In later years, when we visited him in Devon, his interest was in gardening and he had only an Austin A30 or A35 as a shopping car). While I am bothering you, does anyone know what became of a high chassis 2 litre Lagonda that an ex-Sandhurst cadet, Hugo Leech, who used to call on us to meet our daughters, raced at VSCC Silverstone in about 1955? I am reminded of this because before that he had the 1926 Delauney-Belville I once owned and which someone auctioned recently.

Yours sincerely

Bill Boddy

Dear Ken,

I came across the original of this picture at an autojumble early last year and, as a council member of the Society of Procrastinators, have only just got round to copying it for you and the magazine.

The car is BLP 79 (D 10837) and the photo was clearly taken in wartime, as the headlamp masks and white wings testify. The car was owned by D.C.Stenning of Cheltenham from new to

at least 1969, possibly longer, and is now undergoing a restoration in Canada.

I have no idea when or where the picture was taken or who the young lady eating the ice cream is, but I thought it makes an interesting historic picture.

Regards

Arnold Davey

Dear Ken,

The enclosed cartoon was presented to me on the occasion of my 60th birthday by "Graphics", Defence Research Agency, Fort Halstead.

The car is, of course, my 16/80 (AGM 289), which I have owned since 1956.

Yours sincerely

Ron Gee

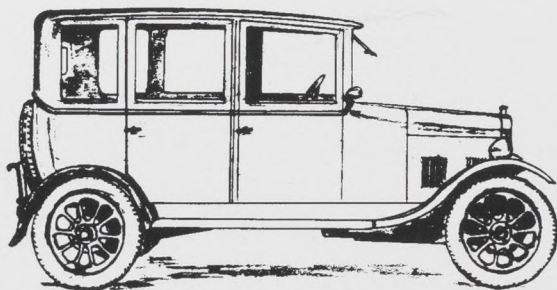
Dear Ken,

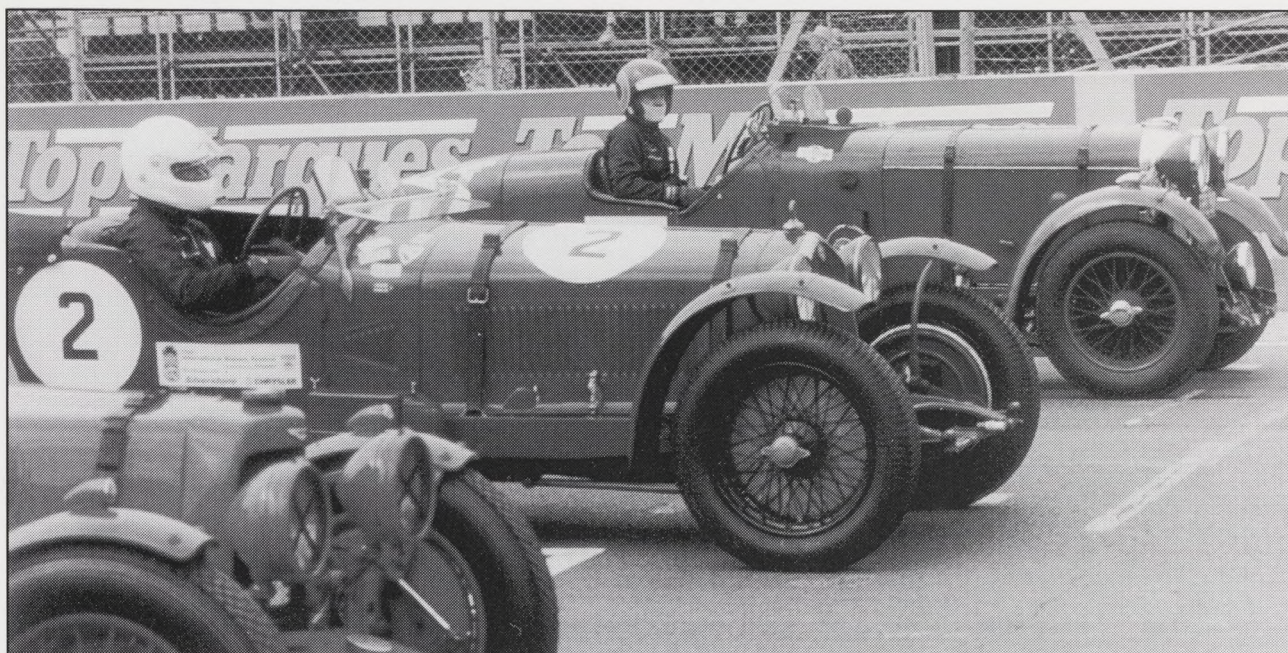
Thought you might be interested in the enclosed photographs, taken on 9th May at a gathering of members at the Northern Lagonda Factory Social Club (The Cross Keys Inn, actually) to celebrate the 65th birthday of Alan Brown.

Yours sincerely

Russell Squires

(See these pictures on pages 28 - 29. KPP)





Why not be on Pole next year?

We rebuilt the Engine and Chassis of Terry Cohn's Lagonda EPE 97 in very short time for this year's Coys' Cup race meeting. The car was driven to Silverstone, it achieved fastest lap on all three days and was only closely beaten into 2nd place overall.

The following week it was driven out to the Nurburgring where it competed in the Old Timer Grand Prix and came 3rd overall, only beaten by an Alfa Monza and an 8C Alfa, it was then driven home.

The next week the old lady was taken to her previous stamping ground Phoenix Park in Ireland where once again she behaved perfectly.

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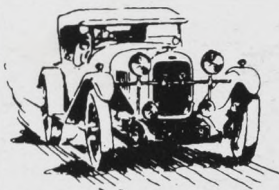
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