

Lagondaforum: Mulliner V12

Mulliner V12

Written by Colin M34 at May 19, 2010 10:32 pm

Hi Folks,

I thoroughly enjoyed the discussion on the lovely ex Ellard collection Graber V12.

I think there is more to learn about the fortunes of the Lagonda Company once peace returned in 1945, and perhaps the reasons why the V12 was not put back into production. These were very uncertain times - after the war the Lagonda Company fortunes were not that rosy. They had lost money through being sued by Rolls-Royce for using the 'Bentley' name, and Arnold Davey told me "someone in authority" had been upset at some point and their punishment was to be deny them a steel quota. It was after all a period of austerity and a Labour government!

Then along came David Brown who bought the Lagonda and Aston Martin companies. He was a very well respected industrialist. He merged the two operations and moved them to the Aston Martin factory at Feltham. Under David Brown, Alan Good, Dick Watney and W.O. Bentley moved on to pursue other opportunities and presumably David Brown made the company just concentrate on getting the LB6 into production - together with the sporty DB2 which of course used the same engine.

With the move from Staines to Feltham, presumably some tidying up took place on the old factory and enough parts were found to assemble a few post war V12s like the two here with coachbuilt bodies. The former service manager set up in a company in Staines called Davies Motors to sell and service Lagonda cars and perhaps he had a hand in their assembly before he left. This is after all what happened with Rapier cars who were were spun out from the bankrupt Lagonda Company in 1935, so we have a precedent here.

In my opinion, the Mulliner bodied V12 is the most beautiful of them all. I have posted a picture of it here. This picture came from Geoff Seaton's book. There was an article about this car in the Club magazines in the 1950's or 60's.

Mulliner went on to create the two-door R type Bentley Continental which used the standard Rolls Royce Crewe chassis and perhaps these were inspired by their work on the wonderful Lagonda V12. Rolls Royce sold about 200 of them and of course today these are very highly sought after cars.

With hindsight, although it is sad that in the 1950s we did not see something like a Graber or Mulliner V12 go into production, the 2.6 and 3 Litre cars sold well so I think David Brown probably did the right thing and thus saved to company.

In his book, Geoff Seaton said that the whereabouts of this car is not known, and somebody mentioned to me that it had been written off in a crash. How sad. Still we have the Graber V12 to admire instead.

Colin M34

Attachments:

[scan of V12.jpg](#) (filesize: 198.23 KB)

Re: Mulliner V12

Written by h14 at Jan 17, 2011 5:00 pm

Hi Colin,

Just acquired some old "Lagonda" magazines (right back to issue 12) & I spotted this car on the cover of issue 84 (Summer 1974). So in case anyone is interested, the registration number was (apparently) V28.

Much prefer Feeley's pre-war styling to this, but assuming 1945/46 manufacture it's certainly more attractive than most of the post war dross. The fastback Bentley Continental was on another level entirely, incredibly attractive when the best of the rest was OK. My other "old car" is a 1951 Riley RMB, which is also beautiful, but then it is really a pre-war style.

As an aside, my uncle had a V12 Rapide in the 1950s, & nearly got overtaken by a Bentley Continental apparently being driven by someone in white

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overalls, with the owner passengering. Obviously the owner indicate he wanted the V12 overtaken...he didn't succeed!

Laurence

Re: Mulliner V12

Written by Owen Eather at Oct 28, 2011 5:25 am

On the Bentley Continental R; comparing specifications, the Conti. is not such a great leap forward. 0 - 60 mph slower than the Short Chassis V 12 and top speed no higher,(if that). Output from the engine about the same as a Sanction 2 and below a Le Mans version.(also a heavier, higher and, perish the thought, less smooth engine). Suspension slightly less sophisticated (not the torsion bar front Independent Bentley design) and styling no more striking than Feely's sublime body. All this, in a car touted as the "fastest saloon" in 52, fourteen years after V 12s set records at faster speeds, on public roads, and came 3rd and 4th at Le Mans (on a try out). Just shows what a well funded and consistent PR message can do.

Re: Mulliner V12

Written by h14 at Oct 28, 2011 11:13 am

I remember reading a road test of a V12 saloon written in the late 1950s, which stated that the performance was still ahead of nearly everything else on the roads at that time. Interestingly, the writer considered the styling "modern" even then.

Absolutely agree about the styling. When my V12 was last on the road, late 70s/early 80s, I went to a Club AGM, & it started raining. Rushed to put the roof up (it's a dhc), & the guy who came to help knew exactly how to erect it & fasten the catches. When I expressed surprise, he replied that he should know...he designed it. yes..it was Frank Feeley. Hero!

Re: Mulliner V12

Written by Julian at Nov 07, 2011 9:45 am

Yep Collin, totally agree!

Top of the Cool wall.

Wonder where it is now?

Julian
