



Kingswinford Rugby Football Club



Accredited Club



DK has a long and interesting history going back to 1920. It is important that we record and publish this story. It is only when we know where we have come from that we can fully appreciate where we are!

We are lucky at DK because we have a keen, accomplished and indeed a published historian and retired Engineer in Bob McMaster.

Bob has huge archives of facts and images of DK going all the way back to its inception in 1920. He has produced articles for the Black Country Bugle and has provided a wealth of information for our website.

If you have any information regarding this article that we might be able to include please contact admin@dk-rfc.co.uk

Please take the time to read them and enjoy!

“People without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture are like a tree without roots.”

DK's Industrial Heritage from classic car to world land speed records.

As previously mentioned in earlier articles DKRFC was established in 1920 by a number of founding members who worked for car manufacturer **A Harper, Sons and Bean Ltd**, located in Dudley and nearby Tipton. The company, later to be known as **Bean Cars Ltd** and ultimately **Beans Industries Ltd**, produced approximately 17,500 motor cars from 1912 to 1929 including approximately 6,400 commercial vehicles from 1924 to 1931.

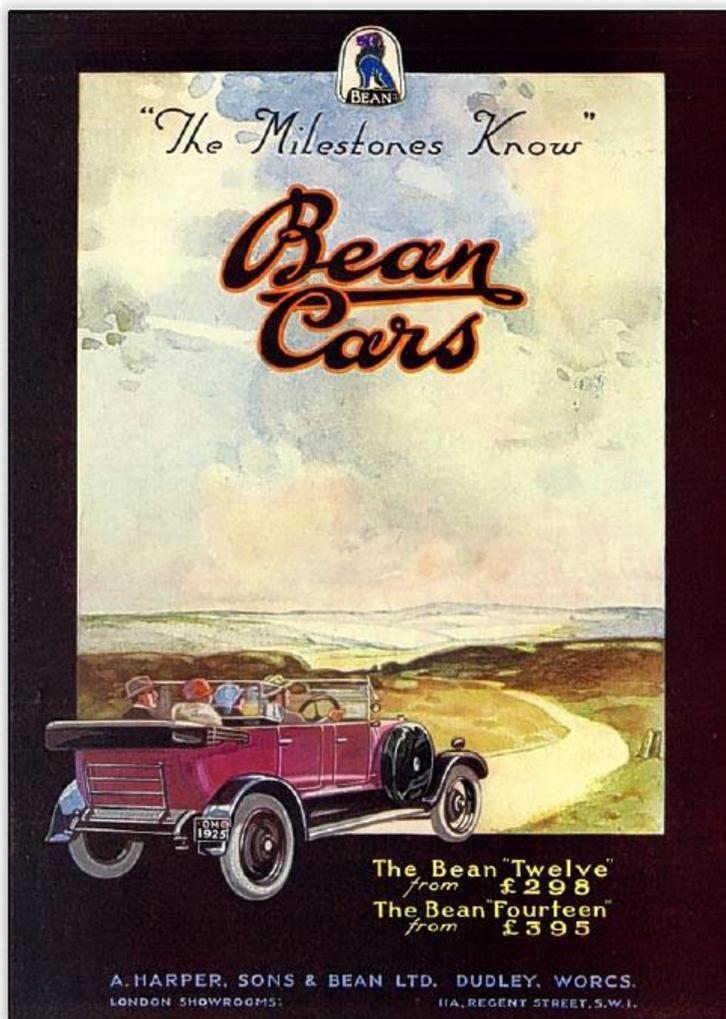


Fig 1: A colourful advertisement for Bean cars.

Harper, Sons & Bean was originally known as Absolom Harper & Sons based at their Waddams Pool Works in Hall Street, Dudley. They were iron founders, established in 1822. The founder Absolom Harper had a granddaughter called Mary Ann who married a George Bean (later to be known as Sir George Bean) who became the principal shareholder of the company and in due course the company's name was changed to A Harper, Sons & Bean Ltd.



Fig 2: Jack H Bean (1885-1963).

In 1921 **Jack H Bean** (son of Sir George Bean) was appointed Managing Director of the company and it was Jack who was to become DKRFC's first President for the 1928/29 season following the rugby club's move from Dudley to Penzer Street, Kingswinford in 1927. Jack Bean's

appointment was richly deserved in view of the support his company had given to the formation of DK from its inception in 1920.



Fig 3: DK member Tony Hickling with his 1926 Bean 14hp four-seater on display at Heathbrook in 2016.

It is worthy of mention that DK has, for a number of years, organised annual reunions for club members who in their earlier years had played rugby at the club's former ground at Penzer Street, Kingswinford. At the annual reunion held in 2016, a physical reminder of the club's industrial heritage, in the shape of a Bean car took centre stage.

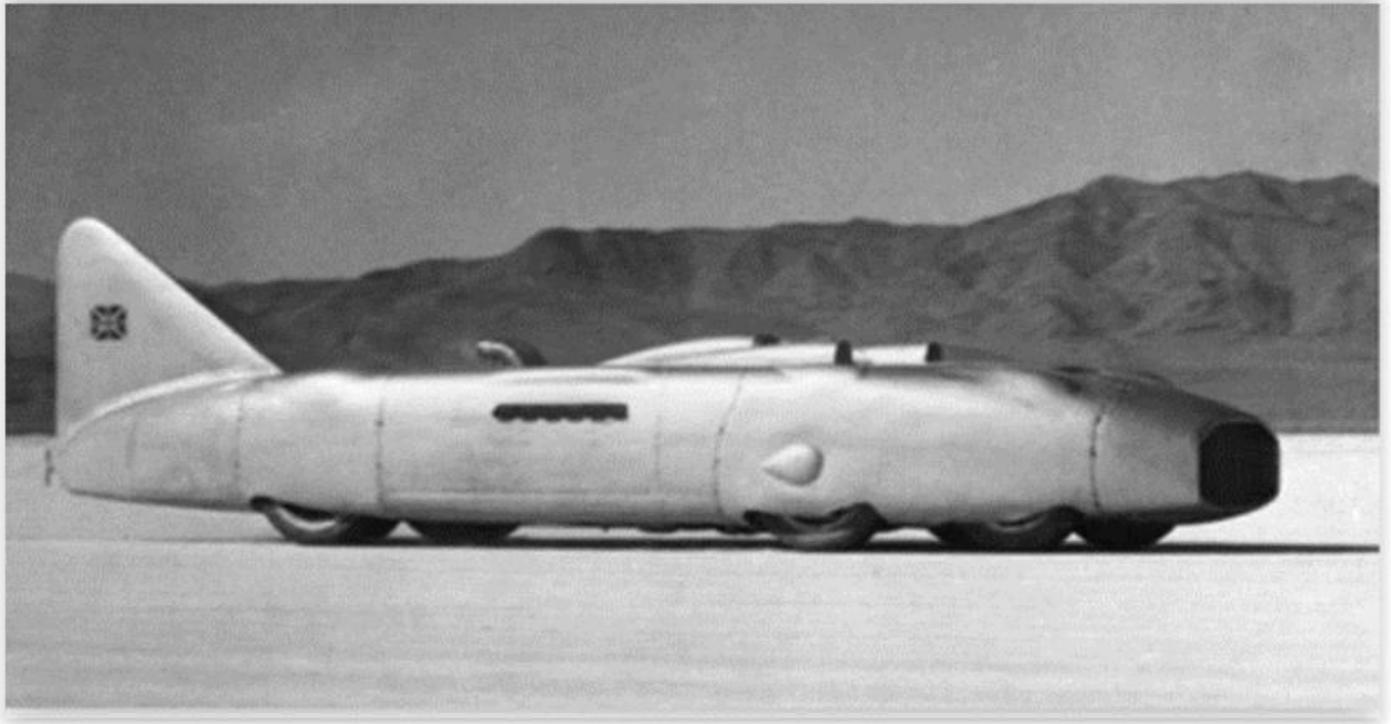


Fig 4: Thunderbolt, the land speed record car. built at Beans Industries Ltd, Tipton.

In 1937 the company, now known as Beans Industries Ltd, obtained a contract to build **Captain George Eyston's** iconic world land speed record breaking car known as the Thunderbolt.



Fig 5: Captain George Eyston (1897-1979).

Captain George Eyston was born in Brampton, Oxfordshire and was awarded the Military Cross for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty' during the First World War.



Fig 6: The Thunderbolt under construction at the factory in Tipton.

Thunderbolt, built in a mere six weeks, was taken by Eyston to the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah, USA for record breaking attempts in 1937. The car achieved a speed record of 312mph and in the following year, 1938, the record was raised to 357.5mph.

For the technically minded, *Thunderbolt* was driven by twin Rolls-Royce R-type supercharged 37 litre capacity V-12 aero engines, each engine delivering 2,350 bhp. (a single version of the same engine was

used in Blue Bird, the Malcolm Campbell land speed record car). The car had three axles and eight tyres; the two leading axles steered and were of different track so that each tyre ran on a clean surface rather than following a rut.

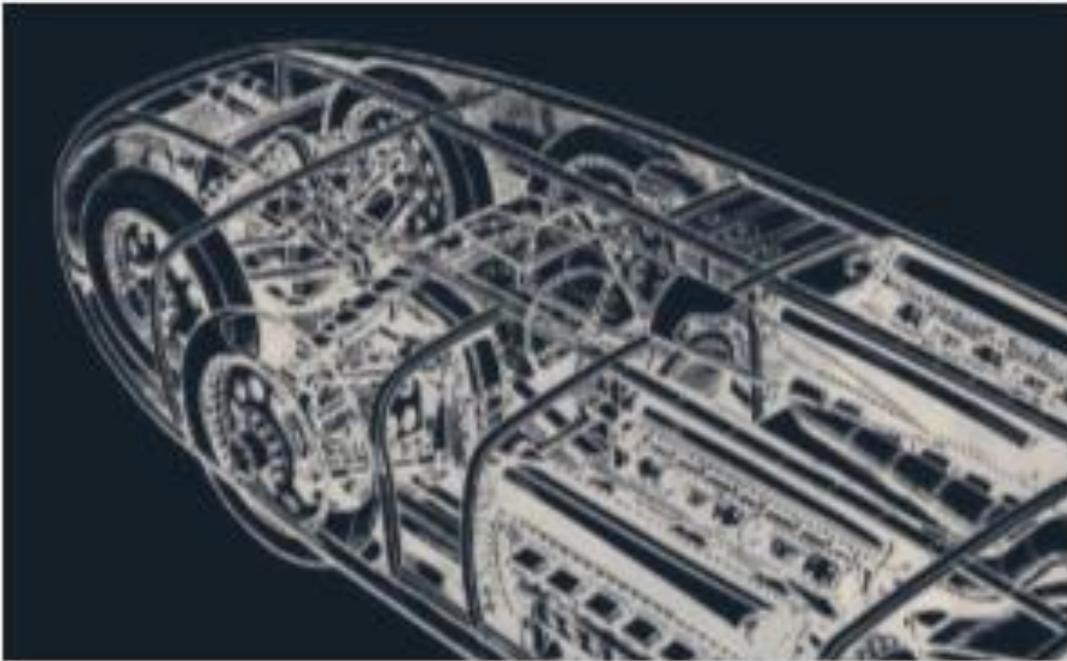


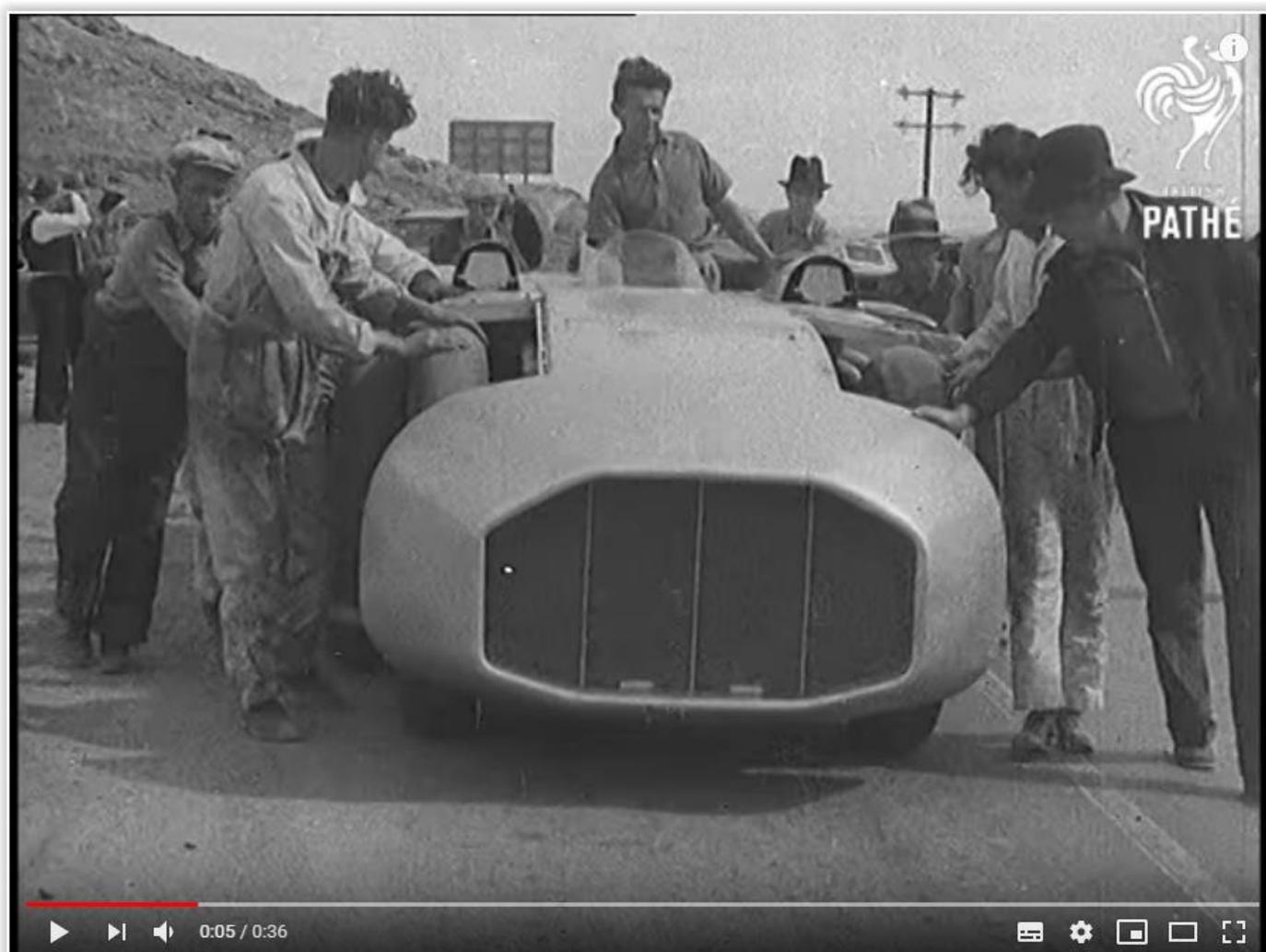
Fig 7: Plan drawing of Thunderbolt showing the offset arrangement of the front four wheels.

The driven rear axle used two twin-tyres to reduce the load on them. Following the record breaking speed record in 1938, the car was displayed at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in 1939-40 and toured New Zealand during the Second World War. Sadly, the car no longer exists having thought to have been destroyed in a warehouse fire.

In 1956 Beans Industries Ltd was purchased by Standard Triumph and it was thus drawn into what, in 1968, became British Leyland and was subsequently renamed Beans Engineering; regrettably the company closed down in 1994.

For 'classic car' enthusiasts who wish to pursue the history of the Bean car in greater detail then reference to the following publication may be of interest: The history of Bean vehicles by Jonathan Wood. Email: shire@shirebooks.co.uk

To see Thunderbolt in action go onto Youtube and paste in **George Eyston and Thunderbolt.**



George Eyston Tries Out Thunderbolt At Salt Lake Aka Thunderbolt Tried Out (1937)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nvqoq9GUAzM>