



**THE MAGAZINE OF
THE LAGONDA CLUB**

Number 227 Winter 2010/2011

DAVID AYRE



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FRONT COVER:

AGM Social Run, a beautiful shot of the cars parked in front of the Falklands War Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne.

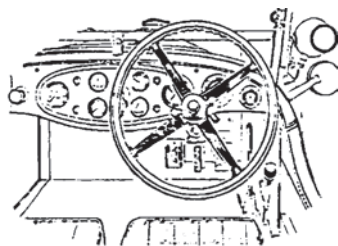
Photo by Peter Lloyd

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From the Driving Seat

Ken Painter



NOW THEN, THIS is important. From the moment I took over as Editor of "The Lagonda" I vowed that I would produce one hundred editions and then retire gracefully. From the moment you read this, I shall have just nine issues to go before I hand over to my successor.

Before I took on this rôle I had already spent my apprenticeship producing magazines and newsletters for three other motoring clubs over a period of around six years, so had a fair idea of what was involved. Since that time, the entire printing industry has revolutionised the printing processes and the editor's part in this is now done entirely on an Apple Mac computer, the printing world's system of choice.

Unless we suddenly discover that we have a volunteer who is an experienced Mac user, with knowledge of using the Quark program and of using the photo editing abilities of Photoshop, we now urgently need a **younger** volunteer to step forward and to work with me for the next two years in learning the ropes and, no doubt, adapting to more new innovations during the learning period as the printing industry continues to

change. I was just short of my 50th birthday when I became editor, but the Board recognises that the days when most new members were in their early twenties have gone for good

All we ask is for someone with a reasonable level of computing skills, not necessarily Mac based, we can give the necessary training for this and provide a lovely Mac computer for the day when you take over, immediately after magazine number 236 is printed in Spring 2013.

The job is probably the most enjoyable post on our Board of Directors and there is no reason why my successor should feel any obligation to serve 25 years in office. Just remember from day one that you too will want to train your successor, so please be prepared to give a decent amount of your time to the job. Never forget that, for many of our members, the magazine and newsletter are their only regular links with our club.

A short Editorial is no place to set out a job description or to discuss the nuts and bolts of editorship, so please form an orderly queue and contact me as soon as possible, I need hardly remind you that my contact details are given on page three!

***Last date for copy for the Spring magazine is
... SATURDAY 26th MARCH 2011 ...***

Chaddesley Corbett Christmas Lunch Meeting

Mike and Barbara Heins report

BACK IN SEPTEMBER we received a regular communication from Terry Brewster giving details and dates of the meetings to be held at the Talbot for the remainder of 2010. Attached was a form for the annual Christmas lunch to be held on Saturday 11th December. We had attended several of these lunches in previous years and had a good time so we decided we would go again this year. The form was duly completed and returned. At the beginning of December, when the snow and ice arrived we wondered if the lunch would take place but luckily the weather improved just in time.

On the day of the lunch the outside temperature had risen a couple of degrees above freezing and after breakfast I went into the garage and started our 2 litre high chassis and drove it outside to warm up with a view to leaving home at about 10.00 to drive the 70 miles to the venue. After a few minutes Barbara came outside, looked at me as if I was stupid and said "You can put that car back in the garage, there is too much salt on the roads and more importantly it is far too cold for me to be a passenger for 2 hours each way. We will go in my car, with heater on, and I will drive back so you can have a drink". Being a dutiful husband, I thought we should still take the Lagonda but after coming back to reality I thought better of it and put the Lagonda back in the garage and we travelled to the pub in warmth and comfort.

The normal format for the event is that attendees arrive from mid-day

onwards, park in the large car park behind the pub and then meet up for a pre lunch drink in the lounge area prior to moving upstairs to the function room at 1pm for the Christmas meal. This year was no exception.

Our journey to the pub was tedious to say the least, with lots of slow moving traffic and we arrived half an hour later than planned at 12.20. The car park was already fairly full and we spotted a line of three Lagondas these being the Brewster's LG45 LM replica, the Yeomans LG45 de ville saloon adorned with matching blue Christmas tinsel around its radiator cap and Ian Robinson's 16/80 spl six tourer. As we were walking down the car park Robin Balmain arrived in his 3 litre tourer and parked up in line with the other proper cars.

On entering the pub lounge it was clear that most of the Lagonda people were already present as the room was packed with familiar faces. It was very nice to see the Colquhouns after Robin's recent health problems. On the way to the bar I spoke with our organiser who informed me he originally had 53 people who were going to attend but unfortunately 7 people had to drop out for various valid reasons leaving 46 to sit down for lunch. Over the next half hour we chatted with various friends and all too soon we were asked to go upstairs for lunch.

The tables were arranged in 5 blocks consisting of 14, 11, 8, 8 and 5 seats respectively and allocation was on a first



Just some of the diners at the Christmas lunch.

Photos by Mike Heins.





John Ryder presents presents a gift to Margaret Brewster.



In spite of the cold weather some brave souls brought their Lagondas.

come basis. Once everyone was seated the lady in charge of providing the meal explained the menu options which consisted of asparagus soup/melon, a main course of turkey with mixed vegetables and mashed potato, followed by Christmas pudding/apple and mincemeat tart/ chocolate cake all served with either custard/cream or ice cream. A vegetarian option was also available.

A couple of hours later, after we had enjoyed a very nice meal, our organiser gave a short speech in which he told a couple of jokes, thanked everyone for coming and presented the "long distance prize" to Robin Balmain for travelling the furthest distance to the event in his 3 litre tourer. The "Midlands Enthusiasts Trophy" was then presented to Walter Thomson. In response Walter said he was very surprised, but honoured, to receive the trophy. He then

went on to say the Lagonda club spring tour, which he is helping to organise, had "sold out" within 48 hours and there are several people on a waiting list.

Walter added that if anyone, not actually on the tour, would like to join the event for the final night's meal, at the Dormy House Hotel on Wednesday 11th May to get in touch with him and if there is sufficient demand he would speak to the hotel and arrange the meal to be held in a larger dining room.

As soon as Walter sat down John Ryder got to his feet and thanked Terry and Margaret Brewster for, once again, organising another splendid set of meetings throughout the year culminating in the Christmas lunch. John then presented Margaret with a suitable bottle of "liquid refreshment". All that was left after this was for people to pay for their meals/wine, say their goodbyes and set off home.



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Why and How I Modified the 16/80 High Water Pump

Brian Savill sorts out the 16/89 high water pump

HAVING SUFFERED THE trials and tribulations one has with the 16/80 high water pump in keeping it thoroughly water tight, this even after following the advice of the Packing Gland Material Manufacturers Association regarding the type of packing material to use and also their advised modifications to the compression sleeves, plus new shafts being manufactured the problems still returned. It also became obvious that not being in regular use was a further problem with this design. It was decided to seek a new solution.

Initial research into modern pump design, with the spindle running in two ball bearings, spaced as wide apart as possible, and incorporated within the original body was not as simple as I initially thought but I decided that it was the way forward. The main problem was finding a gland that would fit into the limited space available and completely stop the coolant from escaping. Following a few false starts satisfactory advice was obtained from the technical department of a seal manufacturer. **See part section view, drawing B, page 12** showing basic design.

The Modification

See sectional drawing "A", (opposite) reproduced and amended from the original Instruction Book, comprising the fan and pulley, the water pump, aluminium housing and part of the cylinder head and rocker cover.

The fan blade and pulley assembly are removed, to be reused without modification.

Parts 1 to 4 plus D and E were discarded.

Photo 1, page 13 is of Pump Body less discarded parts.

Pump Body modification

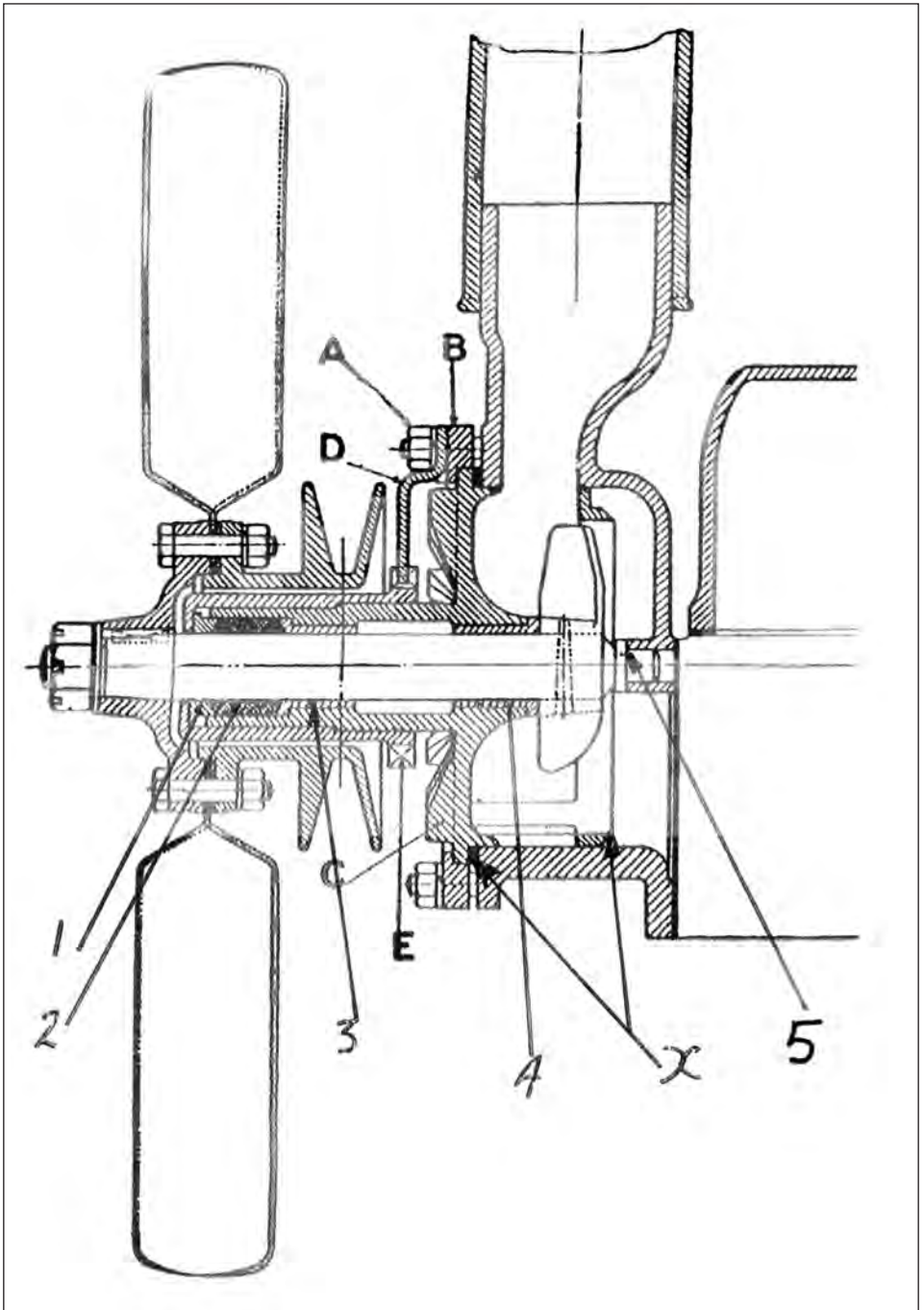
See Drawing C page 12 and photo 2, page 13 The threaded section was turned down to create the required 1.375" diameter, plus the casting at the base of this was trimmed to leave a 6mm wide ring. This to give an accurate location for the new tube. **See photo 3, page 14** The aperture for the stationary section of the new seal **see photo 4, page 14** was machined and at this stage the opportunity was taken to clean up face "X" so as to ensure a good face for the gasket. (GSK103). Depending on its condition it may be advisable to true up face "Y"

At this stage the 1.375" diameter section was reduced to its 18.5mm length.

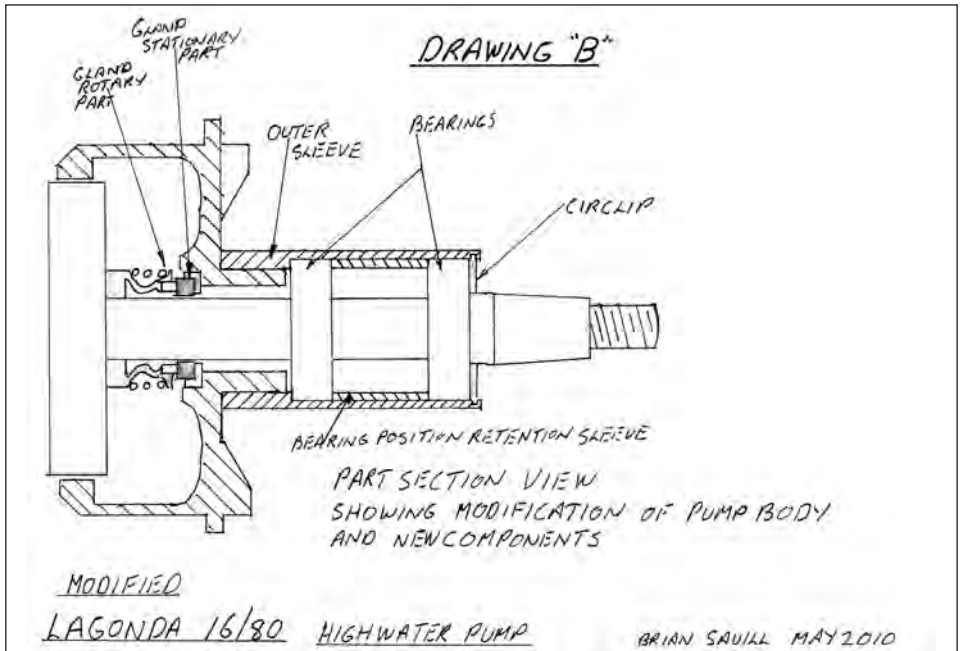
Assembly

It is envisaged that by the time this article is printed a kit of parts including New Spindle and Impeller (to modified designs), Bearings, Gland Seal, Outer Sleeve, Inner Sleeve, Circlip and Grub Screws will be available from Club Spares Section.

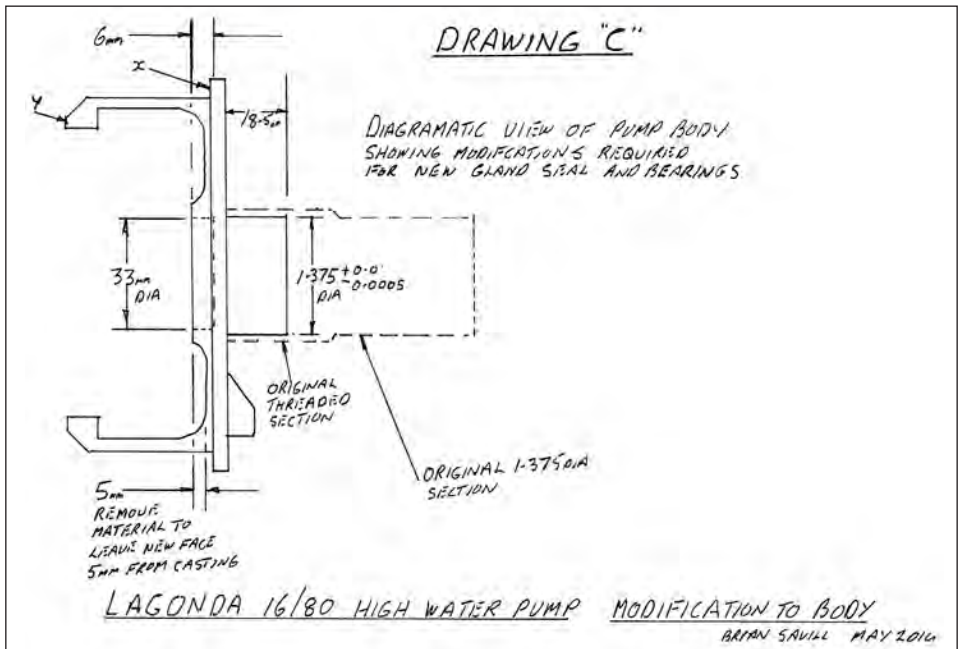
Refer to Drawing B, page 12 and photo 3. The outer sleeve is first secured; it has been found that either Soft Solder or a chemical retainer such as Loctite 601 is suitable. Next the Bearing and Circlip are fitted with the bearing spacer sleeve suitably adjusted so as to allow the circlip to locate leaving the bearing held firmly in place, **see photo 5, page 15** (note, the spindle should not be fitted at this stage). Although the bearings are of a



Drawing A, showing the parts to retain and the parts to remove.



Drawing B, showing the modifications to the pump body.



Drawing C, showing modification required to pump body.



Photo 1, showing the body, less discarded parts.



Photo 2, showing the modified body.



Photo 3, showing the body with new tube attached.



Photo 4, showing the modifications to the aperture for the new gland.



Photo 5, showing the new sealed ball race inside the tube.

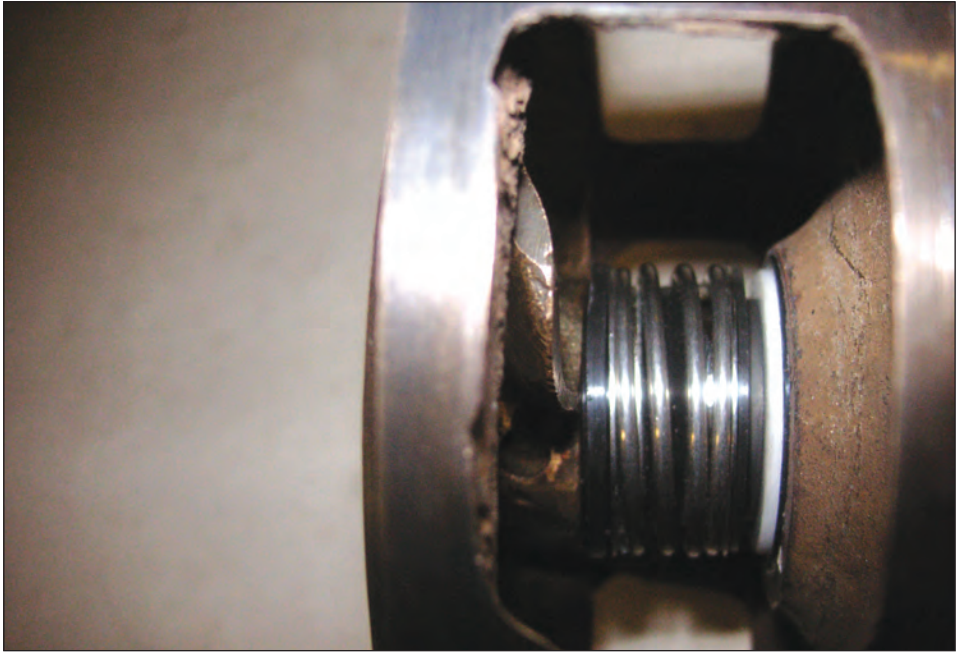


Photo 6, showing the new gland in place.

sealed type the opportunity can now be taken to part fill the aperture between the bearings with HMP grease.

The Gland Stationary Part is next assembled and then the shaft.

This is followed by the Gland rotary Part. **See Photo 6, P15.** The gland manufacturer's instructions, that come with their product, were followed during assembly.

Ensuring the screw holes line up with the indents on the shaft, the impeller is then located on the shaft and secured by the 2 grub screws. **See Photo 7, below.**

Fitting

The top hat pad in the middle of the aluminium housing **item 5 drawing A page 11** should be reduced leaving it just a plug in the hole.

In the original pump design the fan pulley is forward of the crankshaft pulley but with the new design it is more in line. Because of this, it has been found that unless the tips of the fan blades are not at least $\frac{1}{4}$ inch clear of the edge of the crankshaft pulley they can touch at high revs. The original pressed steel blades are easily adjusted by bending in situ to obtain this clearance.

Does it work you may ask

The tourer has endured one Irish and two French trips, a total duration of 38 days and over six thousand miles, on a cup full of additional water, which I assume is just to replace evaporation. The Saloon? It has taken a bit of a back seat lately but since the mod no additional water has been added and no leaks found.



Photo 7, showing the impellor re-fitted on the shaft.



The entrants to the Great Lagonda Race, parked at the hotel.



This V12 Rapide was pictured at Pebble Beach, but the owner's name was not included with the picture!



The next seven pictures all refer to the article on page 21. This shows the new master cylinder for the new system.



The two new servos and their fittings.



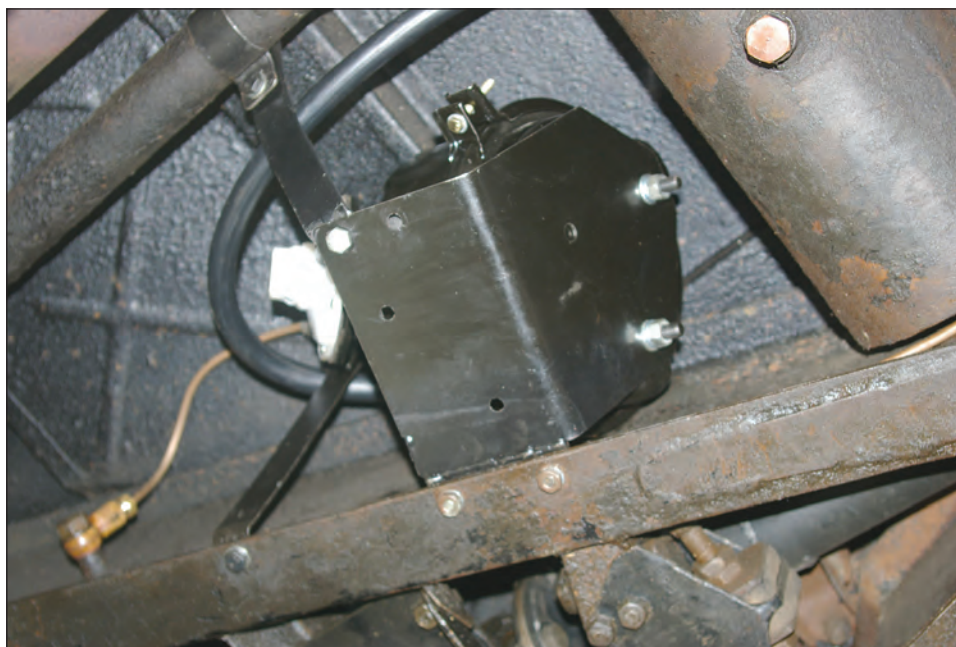
The new master cylinder in place.



The twin hydraulic fluid cylinders, fitted very neatly.



The new brake servos in place.



Brake Mods for a DB Model

Robin Allum doubles-up on his stopping power

THE BRAKE SYSTEM on my 1956 3 litre always needed a lot of effort when applying the brakes and every year the handbrake would fail the MOT, according to the inspector, this car has a single circuit system the hand brake is also the emergency brake should the hydraulic system fail, if it had a dual system the handbrake is then a parking brake, in theory the handbrake can pass on a lower figure. I have checked out the wheel cylinders and found the rear ones were not compensating correctly, they needed freeing off until they would slide satisfactory, the Clayton Dewandre servo had been serviced by a previous owner but there was never the feel of assistance from it. I had the idea of changing the drum brakes to disc brakes and fitting a combined servo and master cylinder with remote reservoirs from an early Jaguar XJ6.

The disc brake conversion would be difficult but a dual circuit system would be easier, unfortunately I could not get the Jaguar unit to fit in place of the existing unit, it would not clear the cross member channels fitted to the underside of the floor, fitting remote servos two would be needed, I spoke to a classic and vintage brake supplier who advised using 1.9:1 servos but could not help with dual circuit master cylinders as these were too modern for him. I found the American company of Wilwood make a lot of equipment for race cars, they do a 1" dual circuit master cylinder that would fit, I went on the web to find the Wilwood UK agent, they had a suitable one in stock, a kit with reservoirs for remote fitting. I have

a Lockheed guide sheet for Lagonda 2½ litre mk I & II and 3 litre without servo, a Lockheed LE 10117 servo is recommended, this has a ratio of 3:1 although I was recommended to use 2 servo's with 1.9:1 ratio. on e-bay I found some servos but the prices varied so much and sold by the same company, MGBHIVE, I spoke to them and they informed me they are of different ratios, they had a pair of 1.9:1 servos so I bought them, they are brand new Powertune units and appear to be the same as the old Lockheed units even down to the instruction sheet, how reliable they are only time will tell, a lot of them are sold.

On removal of the old combined servo and master cylinder it became clear the new master cylinder would need a new support bracket making, this I made from 3mm steel and had to fit nearer to the pedal, the operating rod supplied with the Wilwood unit is $\frac{5}{16}$ " unf male thread, the clevis bracket that it needed to fit on is $\frac{3}{8}$ " bsf male thread, I had some $\frac{3}{8}$ " hexagonal bar so I made an adaptor.

The site for the servos was limited, both would fit to the rear of the cruciform in the chassis, the one for the front brakes fitted forward of the fuel pump, they come with a couple of brackets and only some small modification was needed to fit them on the main chassis rail and the tube rail, the rear brake servo is on the other side but the silencer is close, they need to be a certain distance from the exhaust system, I could just about get this

distance but a heat shield will be fitted as well as a dirt shield.

The size of the original pipe work for the brakes is $\frac{1}{4}$ " with $\frac{5}{16}$ " unf thread, the new equipment uses $\frac{3}{8}$ " unf or 10mm threads so this would present a problem, fortunately I found nuts with $\frac{5}{16}$ " unf thread for $\frac{3}{8}$ " pipe that would be needed for the new equipment, 2 of these nuts would be required one for the banjo fitting on the rear brakes flexible hose the other for the tee on the front brakes.

I used cupra-nickle $\frac{3}{16}$ " brake pipe, it does not rust like steel pipes or suffer with cracking that can happen with copper pipe, I have a pipe flaring tool so making up the pipes was not a problem, to get the pipes to fit first time I used a length of wire, 1.5mm single electrical cable to be exact, I run the cable along the route bending it to conform with all bends etc then laid it along the pipe and cut the pipe 10mm longer for the flares, my one problem with the pipes was on the master cylinder, they fit to the bottom of it and turning them into to master cylinder would be too close to the exhaust pipe, not a problem if you have an original engine but I have a V6 engine and one pipe comes close and I also need the shield to fit, banjo fittings would solve the problem if I could find

some, this was overcome by fitting flexible hoses with banjos, the other end fitted to plates on the chassis so the $\frac{3}{8}$ " pipe could couple up.

The vacuum pipe would be connected to the existing tank but now there would be two pipes, the connection to the tank is $\frac{3}{8}$ " British standard pipe thread, I made up a manifold from 15mm brass rod with two spigots silver soldered to it, the end is turned down to $\frac{3}{8}$ " for the pipe union nut and olive to fit on the vacuum tank.

The reservoirs are fitted to a plate then fitted to the original mounting points, I would have liked to retain the original reservoir but I felt this would be a safer option.

Once the system was bled came the road test, the brakes have a totally different feel, the effort is certainly less, light braking is similar as before but heavier braking requires much less pushing on the pedal, before under heavy pedal pressure one felt the car would not stop now there is much more confidence when applying the brakes, in my mind it was a good modification to the car, the disc brake conversion I want to carry out is proving to be too complicated as new hubs would have to be made if I wanted to retain the original wheels.





Cover plates neatly fitted to protect the servos.



A fine 2 litre 1c saloon at Silverstone.

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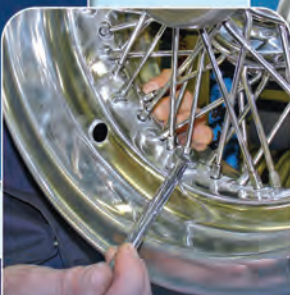
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The Suffolk Dinner

Saturday 9 April 2011, 6.45pm for 7.15pm

at

The White Lion Hotel

Market Cross Place, Aldeburgh

Winter Vegetable Soup



Saffron, Orange Soused Mackerel Salad

or

Melon Rose with Minestrone Fruits



Sutton Hoo Chicken with Parsnip Mash, Mushroom & Bacon Sauce



Bakewell Tart and Crème Anglaise

or

Mixed Berry Brûlée

or

Selection of Suffolk Cheeses



Coffee and Petits Fours



After dinner Colin Mallett Esq., Suffolk Enthusiast Extraordinaire, will tell us tales of "Fun I have had with Lagondas".

Gary Guiver Gong award for the Rapier coming furthest. Dress optional.

Vegetarian main course available if **requested when you order tickets** – see flyer for details.

Tickets £30 each + s.a.e., cheques payable to Mike Pilgrim, from Little Orchard, Bredfield, WOODBRIDGE, IP13 6AW, by 26 March please.

The White Lion, tel. 01728 452720, offers rooms, or for details of other accommodation contact Mike on 01394 382773. Book in good time!

ALSO – on Sunday 10 April



Meet for lunch, from noon onwards at the Old Mill House, Saxstead Green near Framlingham

Bring your Lagonda!





These two photos were found by Graham Doyle in the Melton Mowbray Farmers' Market. It is thought that the lower picture shows Richard Tansley, whose name is on the back of the pictures.



Lagondas at the Kop Hill

Christopher Hobbs was there

KOP HILL, CLOSE by Princes Risborough is one of the oldest Hill Climb venues in England, in the 1910/20's, Kop Hill was one of several hill climbs in the Chilterns along with Aston Clinton. It was a major event on the motor sports car and motorcycle calendar and many famous names had runs up the hill.

Well known car drivers included Malcolm Campbell in his 12hp Talbot 'Blue Bird', Raymond Mays (Bugatti), Henry Segrave (2 litre Grand Prix Sunbeam), Count Zborowski (8 cylinder Ballot) and Archie Frazer Nash (Kim II). The fastest time recorded for a car was in 1922 when Count Zborowski's GP Ballot (an aero-engined monster) achieved 26.8 secs. The motorcycles were faster with a time of 26 seconds in 1922 set by Kaye Don on his 7.9hp Indian. In 1925 Freddie Dixon became the fastest man up the hill with a time of 22.8 seconds on his 736cc Douglas (an average of 81mph!).

The first speed event up this fairly straight, loose macadam, overall 1 in 5 gradient was held in 1910. The last event in this early period was on 28th March 1925 and when, as a result of a mild accident to a spectator, whose leg was broken, the RAC decided to ban all motor sport on public roads. [The actual Bugatti Brescia involved even came back this time to repeat a number of runs – without incident this time!]

Kop Hill is just over 1000 metres long to the summit and rises by 100 metres. It starts with a gentle slope and

is 1 in 6 at the half way mark. The road then eases off before it gets even steeper at 1 in 4 just before the summit. The finish of the run is before the summit to allow vehicles to slow down. From start to finish the run is 860 metres. The road is well surfaced today.

Well this year some seven Lagondas were listed, plus an Invicta and an eighth substituted for an HE by one of our members – these were Colin Rodgers in a 1927 Lagonda 14/60; Colin Browny with a 1927 Invicta 3/4.5; George Stanton's 1928 2 L HC - UH5328; Maurice Leo was listed in his 1930 2L supercharged – but was not there this time after a strong performance on the Hill last year; Graham Thorne was going well in his 1932 16/80 but with 3 passengers slowed on the final steep gradient! Christopher Hobbs in the 1932 2L LC ex Densham car, was going well but not with wheel spin! Tim Metcalfe with the 1935 Rapier (Le Mans) was the sole Rapier this year and finally Stephen Matthews was having fun in the LG45 TT, which was looking very purposeful!

Why go to just do demo runs? Well as a VSCC reporter said last year " the Kop Hill Climb has returned as a commemorative climb without timed runs, but entrants were encouraged to drive up the hill with determination but without risk, rather than a competitive event"

This certainly allowed for wheel spin off the line and some pretty fast ascents to be enjoyed! Plus for all who

had not been in a hill climb before it was a chance to try it out – without overalls, crash hats or medicals!

This Centenary event lived up to all expectations – it was another fantastic weekend. Some 8,000 spectators came over the two day, but this did not make it seem at all crowded. A wide range of 350 veteran, vintage, classic vehicles with invited super-cars roaring up the hill, including the locally based Ecurie Eccosse team cars were there in action too and brought by their original transporter. The marshalling and

paddock control was firm but friendly and added to the 'right crowd' feel of the two days and great fun was enjoyed by all who came.

Why not come along next year and swell the Lagonda numbers – especially cars from that era up to 1925 - and embryonic Hill Climbers?

The dates next year are provisionally to be 24/25th September 2011 when permissions granted - and go to www.kophillclimb.info for the join in call for Kop Hill 2011 – likely to be posted in February time.



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Christopher Hobbs at Kop Hill, this shot shows the flatter part of the course.



Christopher approaching the finish line.



Christopher Hobbs in the Kop Hill paddock.



The proud award winners at the AMOC Presentation. From left to right, Tim Wadsworth, Richard reay-Smith, Angus Dent (Chair of the AMOC), Stephen Matthews and Roger Seabrook.

Competition Round-up

Tim Wadsworth signs off as our Competition Secretary

AS A FITTING finale to our Anniversary Year celebrating 75 years since that famous Le Mans win, the Lagonda team has won the Pre-War Sports Car Team Challenge. Originally conceived as the Lagonda / Bentley Race it was extended to include pre-war Aston Martins and more recently, as numbers have fallen, particularly Bentleys, other marques have been invited to join as well.

This year's series of races opened at Oulton Park in May, not an ideal circuit for big Sports Cars but we had four entries: Richard Reay-Smith and Stephen Mathews with their LG 45s and Tim Wadsworth's 2 litre made up the team with Roger Seabrook in his Rapier adding to the numbers. Stephen, racing his new car for only the second time was our star coming second on handicap, Richard was fourth and Tim seventh out of a field of 16. This was a good enough result to give us a comfortable win.

The second round took place at Brands Hatch in late June but this time we could only muster two Lagondas and had to call on the services of a

Speed 25 Alvis driven by Brian Maile to make up the numbers. Brian did well for us coming fifth just behind Alan Chandler driving Robert Lewis's V12 and just in front of Richard Reay-Smith in the LG 45. The result wasn't quite good enough to beat the team of Austin 7 Specials but the handicapper would sort them out next time round !

By the time we got to the final round at Donington Stephen had suffered from engine failure also missing out on the Great Lagonda Race but John Waterson was back in form. John had an epic tussle with Jane Varley in the Aston Martin, gallantly allowing Jane to pass the flag first by just a second. Richard Reay-Smith was also involved in a tight race with Peter Dubsky's Aston. When the results were computed John and Richard were seen to be first and fifth on handicap, the closeness of the racing having brought out the best of their driving skills. Tim Wadsworth tidied up at the rear. Aston Martin 2 were the winners on the day but we had done enough to come second and that was sufficient to give us first place overall three races.



Connie

Ken Painter buys another car

WELL, I'VE DONE it now, I have bought another Lagonda. Not a model that would be every Lagonda owner's choice either, but a 12/24 tourer of 1925. It is slow enough not to frighten the horses and, most importantly, was at a price I could afford without seriously prejudicing the never-ending restoration of my 2 litre.

First, a little bit of history about the new car: PE 7073, from here on to be called Connie, was discovered by Colin Mallett many years ago behind his local blacksmith's shop. It had started life as an S Type Saloon, but had been converted into a pick-up truck, possibly in the late thirties or mid forties and used until it simply wore out. The last date for taxing the pickup was 31st December 1951, when it was taxed for another full year. The continuation registration document that came with the car dates from March 12th 1930. Colin's name being the third entry, the first two names have the same surname, so it is possible that it simply passed from father to son in 1948.

If my memory serves me right, "PE" is a Surrey registration. Unless the old East Suffolk records still hold the original registration document we may never know how many owners enjoyed the car before it moved to Suffolk, but I am only the 5th owner since March 1930.

Colin bought its mortal remains, found an early Hillman tourer body to fit the chassis, restored it all to running condition and enjoyed it for many years before selling it. That brief statement covers a huge amount of work on Colin's part, he has promised me that he will write a fuller account of its discovery and subsequent restoration for a future magazine.

The new owner used it gently for a while, then, as his health and mobility

deteriorated, simply got out of the habit of driving it, so it slumbered peacefully in his garage until I negotiated its purchase.

My intention is to re-commission the engine, get the car back on the road and then to undertake the very minimum of cosmetic and mechanical work to tidy up one or two minor defects. For those of you who enjoy "The Automobile" magazine, I intend to maintain the car much as they care for their "Oily Rag" collection. They prefer to find cars in totally un-restored condition and to keep them exactly as found, so that they can form a point of reference for future generations, although they are happy to rebuild engines and to maintain the running gear in proper working order. Since my car was restored some 40 or so years ago, I can't follow their methods exactly, so will try to keep it looking clean, tidy and well maintained. It won't look, or be, perfect, but it will be useable and a gentle trundle to the VSCC's April Silverstone meeting seems to be an interesting target for a first long run.

I admit to knowing very little about early models of Lagonda and my experience of them had been limited to a ride in this very car during Colin Mallett's early days with it, at a Monk Fryston Dinner, many years ago. Slightly more recently, I was given the opportunity to try a very short and enjoyable drive in the 11-1 owned by Steve Lawrence. For what follows, I am indebted to earlier works by Alan K Audsley and Arnold Davey. Our magazine has seldom featured much about the 12/24 and since there is nothing new in this article I fear I shall add nothing to our sum of knowledge.

The internet led me to a website where a copy of the 1926 catalogue, an extract from "Motor Commerce", on

servicing the car, dating from January 1926 and a copy of the wiring diagram were on display and promptly downloaded, but all I learned that I had not known before was that, in 1926 at least, you were not restricted to the one standard colour when you bought your new Lagonda!

The 12/24 represents the final flowering of Lagonda's attempts to break in to the mass market. The range began with the 11-1, which was first built in 1913, re-introduced after the war, then updated to become the 11-9 in 1919.

This new and more powerful model introduced many important changes under the skin. The steering was given a proper steering box, and the front axle given a Panhard rod to control what Guru Davey beautifully describes as "rather approximate steering." Having driven the 11-1, I know just what he means. With just a quarter turn from lock to lock, it demanded a level of finesse that many of the drivers of the time would have found difficult - and some modern drivers find terrifying. A new radiator design was introduced, instead of the very Edwardian looking rounded radiator with vertical cooling tubes, the car now had an almost square and flat fronted radiator with a honeycomb core. The unique body-cum-chassis design was retained, with its angle iron frame forming the basic shape and the body panels riveted in place.

Further slight changes were made in 1924 and the model re-named the 12/24, the radiator was made taller, its top corners rounded and the distinctive enamelled radiator badge, later adopted as the Club badge was used for the first time. The overhead inlet valve mechanism was finally given a cover and the rockers given a drip-feed oil supply. Shortly after this, front wheel brakes were offered as an option, becoming a standard fitting in 1925. At some point, the unique chassis/body construction was quietly dropped and the car given a more orthodox chassis shape, which

must certainly have helped when offering a wider range of body styles. For the first time, the car could be bought in chassis form, but there is no evidence that any were sold.

With an engine of only 1421cc, developed from a design that first saw the light of day in 1912, the 12/24 is no great performer. Lagonda themselves clearly had other views and the catalogue pages on *"Special features of the New Lagonda 12/24"* begin with the following: *"One of the outstanding features of the 12/24 Lagonda is the amazing power output of an engine of such moderate dimensions, as a glance at the Power Curve of the Lagonda Engine will tell. This reserve of power ensures a very high average of speed being maintained over long distances when touring and enables hills to be surmounted in top gear, where on many engines of a similar capacity a lower gear would have to be resorted to."* It goes on to talk of the car's *"quick acceleration"* and how this makes it *"a delightful car to handle in traffic, as five to fifty miles an hour on top speed can be obtained without the slightest difficulty."*

The power curve they extol so highly shows the bhp rising from 10 bhp at 1,000 rpm to marginally over 24 bhp at 3,000 rpm, where the power curve simply flattens out and no higher readings are listed. To put this into context, a 1924 road test of the 12/24 saloon by "Motor" Magazine, having attained 52 mph on the road and at Brooklands with one passenger on board points out that *"very few people would want to drive an enclosed vehicle at this speed."* How times and standards change!

The 11-9 and 12/24 produced around 23 to 24 bhp throughout their production run. Early cars were lighter and faster, as a comparison, the first 11-1 models weighed around 9 cwt, but the 12/24 saloons were over twice this at around a ton. No effort was made to increase the engine's power, although

the semi-private racing 11.9 broke records at over 80mph. Increasing body weight was countered by lower final drive ratios, giving a top speed of around 45 to 50mph and a comfortable cruising speed considerably lower. It would appear that inlet valve bounce at around 3,000 rpm was as much a factor here as low power. True, the engine has overhead inlet valves, when most of its competitors were still using side valves, but it has a fixed head block, a feature that was becoming very dated by the mid '20s, although it remained popular with some sports and racing car builders.

The gearbox was hardly changed at all during the life of the range of models. It is a three speed design, with a very short lever set well back from the gearbox itself - was this the first example of a 'remote control' system? - and an odd layout, with first 'top left', reverse 'bottom left', second 'bottom right' and top gear 'top right'. The gearbox layout may seem unusual, but it essentially the same as my People Carrier, but with two of the intermediary gears left out and is a very logical layout, since the car is so flexible it can be driven in top gear at little more than walking speed, so gear changing is normally only necessary for fairly steep hills.

Next to the gear lever is a long handbrake lever working on what we would now recognise as Lagonda's familiar 'fly-off' system. The brakes were, by this time ten inches diameter and the introduction of the four wheel braking system meant that they could dispense with the somewhat ineffective transmission handbrake, which tended to fill the driving compartment with smoke when it was used in anger. Like the 2 litre that followed a year later, the handbrake now operated on a separate set of shoes in the rear drums, very useful when more braking force is needed and it usually is in modern traffic...

In true Lagonda fashion, the car was offered with a range of body styles, from four seater tourers (there were two

versions, one confusingly called the All Weather Saloon as it had proper wind-up windows), to a saloon and a two seater coupe. The hoods of the open versions were particularly easy to erect and the task could be done simply by one person.

Lagonda offered their models in a very limited range of standard colours, with the saloon offered in blue with black wings, with the option of maroon or fawn at no extra cost, the tourer was offered in fawn, with the options of blue or maroon and the MC Coupe came in blue, with maroon or fawn as options. Intriguingly the 1926 catalogue stated that the tourer would come with matching upholstery if blue or maroon paint was chosen, but does not mention this for the other models.

Other paint colour options must have been available, possibly at extra cost, as the saloon offered to the press for road tests in 1925 was finished in a very attractive primrose yellow and black.

Connie is painted in dark blue with black wings and the Hillman's now faded black leather upholstery. The colour suits the lines of the Hillman body very well.

There are no pictures to accompany this article as the car was virtually entombed in its garage by new top dressings of gravel in front of the doors which made them impossible to open (this has since been removed!). It was not possible to stand back far enough to take any useful shots, as there was another car also in deep hibernation alongside, so you must wait until the Summer magazine to see how the car looks.

Why have I decided to give the car the name Connie? When the car was owned by Colin, someone suggested he should call it Hilda to reflect its Hillman/Lagonda ancestry. He wasn't keen on this and neither am I, so she is now named after Wilbur Gunn's English wife. Since Arthur Jeddere Fisher called his 12/24 "Wilbur", this at least maintains the tradition of giving the car a "Lagonda family" name!

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