



THE MAGAZINE OF THE LAGONDA CLUB

Number 224
Spring 2010



DAVID AYRE



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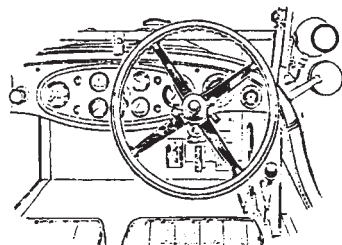
Richard Campbell parks as far south as possible on The Bluff, South Island, New Zealand. See page 21.

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From the Driving Seat

Ken Painter



THANKS TO ARNOLD DAVEY, in this edition we are treated to a real blast from the past, with an account of a pioneering competitive run from Oxford to York and back in 1914. These early magazines are increasingly difficult to find and the paper on which they are printed is now very fragile. The photographs have been scanned from the magazine and this accounts for their less than perfect quality.

The description of the condition of the roads reminds us that, even now, with our road surfaces far from perfect after the hard winter and years of neglect, they are still incomparably better than they were a hundred or so years ago. It would be fascinating to attempt the same journey now in a car of roughly comparable performance to see how long it would take.

Bringing the saga of long and challenging journeys in Lagondas up to date, Richard Campbell relates his experiences on a tour of New Zealand. His five week plus visit was probably not as challenging as the 1914 run, but it serves to emphasise that our cars are entirely suitable for long distance events, something in which they have excelled since the famous St. Petersburg reliability trial of 1911.

It is not normal practice to report on auctions, or auction prices, but the auction of the David Wield collection was an unusual event and the cars have

been saved from total destruction not a moment too soon. I have it on good authority that it is intended that all three are to be restored to their former glory. I considered attending and bidding for that surviving kit of parts for the 2 litre saloon, since the body is complete, something I still can not claim for my own assemblage of parts. However I resisted the opportunity to speed up my own restoration project at the expense of destroying the chance to see a second vintage 2 litre saloon saved from oblivion.

I must not forget the book review of Brian Ricketts' book "Passion for Older Cars", which he has published privately. Here he charts his wide experience of cars of many makes which he has owned, driven and in many instances restored. On a personal note, one of his restoration projects was first offered to me and I reluctantly refused it, as it was truly in dreadful condition and was not the body style I was seeking. Brian's subsequent restoration of the car was superb and I bow my head in respect of a man who was not afraid to take on such a challenge.

Finally, I should like to thank most sincerely the many members who offered their sympathy on learning of the death of my wife Christine. Almost a third of the mourners at her funeral were Lagonda Club members, she would have been proud of you all.

Last date for copy for the Spring magazine is

... Friday 25th June 2010 ...

David Wield And His Lagondas

Alan Elliott reports on an unusual auction

DAVID WIELD, who died aged 78 in June 2009, used to be a member of the Lagonda Club some thirty years ago. He owned at least three two-litre Lagondas, a high chassis saloon and two L/C tourers. He will particularly be remembered for organising the manufacture of various spares, including pistons, half shafts, crown wheels and pinions, and probably other items. However, he resigned from the Lagonda Club some years ago, possibly as a result of some disagreements arising from these spares. He never married and is survived by his sister, Diana.

It was in December 2009 that I was approached by Brian Chant of Dorset Vintage and Classic Auctions, for assistance in identifying a quantity of Lagonda spares and dismantled cars he had been asked to sell - by David Wield's sister. Some of these parts were in a poor state, and were also mixed up with many parts from other makes of car - Alvis, Morris, Austin and others.

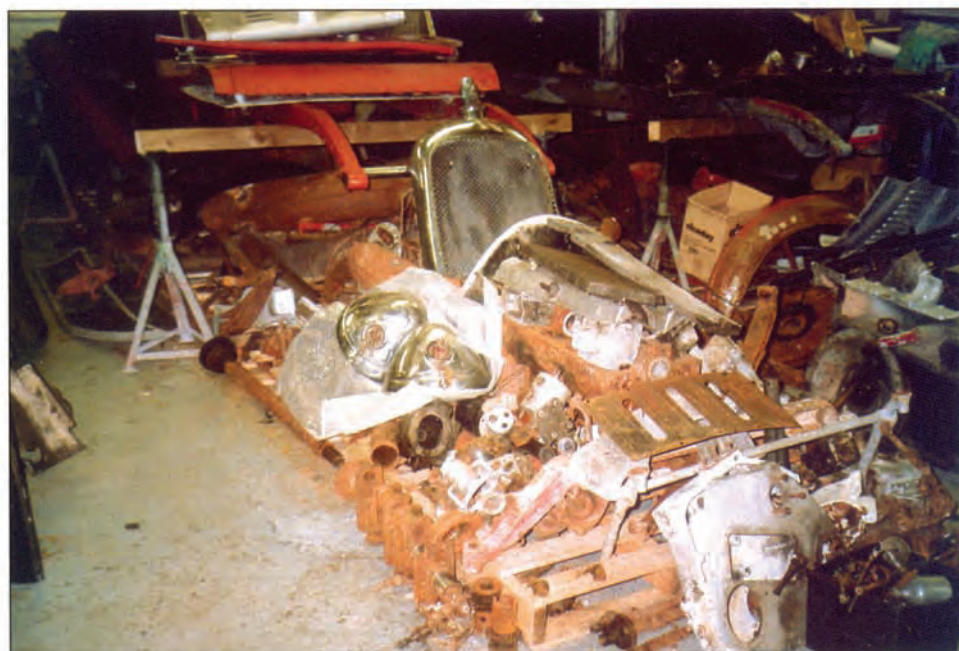
David had lived with his mother in a big old house near Brixham in Devon, but after his mother had died aged 95, ten years ago, David had become very much a recluse. The undergrowth in the untended garden had gradually covered the house and garages, and all became hidden under a forest of creeper, trees and bushes. Sadly, when David died he was not found for six weeks. But he had decided that he did not want his relations to benefit from the value of the cars. So he entirely dismantled them - most comprehensively. The cars were reduced to their bare frames. All was reduced to the absolute minimum.

Engines, gearboxes, rear axles, SU carburettors, magnetos, superchargers were taken apart - even speedometers and rev-counters dismantled. Everything was distributed around the garage floor amongst other debris. The roofs of the garages and the house had been partly taken off. The creeper had invaded the garage - all was open to the weather. Other parts were thrown out into the garden, some being buried.

There were at least eight empty gearbox cases. Large numbers of gearwheels were found, coming from a mixture of OH and Z boxes, and with an assortment of different gear ratios. There seemed to be enough crankshafts, con-rods, pistons, sprockets, chains, clutches, valves, camshafts, rockers, autovacs, differentials, axles, brake shoes, brake drums, stub axles, king pins, wheels, headlamps etc. for more than three cars. From the number of parts which were found, David must have dismantled several other cars in addition to the three which could be identified. There were also a great number of spare half-shafts, crown wheels, cylinder heads and other items. All were rusty or corroded to a greater or lesser extent. The auctioneers decided to sell the dismantled cars as three lots in the hope they could eventually be rebuilt. However, there could be no guarantee that parts had been correctly allocated to the three cars. The Lagonda spares were all auctioned separately - 113 lots, also a huge quantity of automobilia and memorabilia. The half-shafts probably date from 1982, when David Wield organised manufacture of a batch, although Phil Ridout who inspected



The David Wield cars, not as most would prefer to find them.





All credit to the team of Club members who assisted with the parts sorting.



them was not 100% happy. His main comments related to undersize bearing diameters, the fit of the splines and some of the surfaces finishes. Phil's inspection reports have come to light and Brian Chant has kindly donated them to the Club. Phil's overall comment was that the shafts would obviously work as half-shafts and would eventually bed-down, but albeit with rather a lot of backlash. The undersize bearing diameters could be corrected with Loctite. I myself bought one of these shafts, and a crown wheel and pinion from David in 1982. I hope they will fit when the time comes to use them!



Arnold Davey has been very helpful in sorting out the details of the three dismantled cars which were auctioned. They were:-

Two Litre Lagonda Saloon GC 8638.

First Registered 8th March 1930

Car No. 9473, Engine No. OH1217, Timing case No. S895, Type LSMW.

Was originally fitted with a reverse direction camshaft-engine.

Dismantled from the scuttle forward, but the body (a Weyman saloon) more or less complete.

Illustrated on page 31 of Frostick's book (Aston Martin and Lagonda)

Two Litre Lagonda L/C Tourer PL 189.

First Registered 18th June 1930

Car No. 9686, Engine No. 1434, Timing case No. OHL2 1156, Type OHL.T

First Registered July 1931

Car No. OH 9925, Engine No. 1674, Timing case No. OHL2 1087, Type OHL.T2



There was a great deal of publicity prior to the auction, which took place in Somerset on 25th March. It was quite a Lagonda Club gathering, with many well-known members present. The Club was successful in buying large quantities of the spares, but other bidders also chipped-in. All three dismantled cars were all bought by a Club member, the saloon for £14,000 and the tourers for £12,000 each (hammer prices). However it is a great pity that when David Wield decided he didn't want his relations to benefit from the cars, it would have been better if he had sold them and given the money to the cats' home. Everyone would have been saved a great deal of trouble. The final difficulty was of course that David did not leave a will. You may ask what was his profession? He was a solicitor!



24 Hours On A Lagonda

The Arduous Duties of an Official Observer in the Oxford - York - Oxford Run

(Reprinted from "The Light Car and Cyclecar, 2nd March 1914)

THE VAST wooden floor of the skating rink had been cleared and ranged round the walls was a strange looking collection of light cars, cyclecars and sidecars.

Competitors and officials were hurrying hither and thither, putting the finishing touches to the machines, setting their watches and wrapping up in a most weird and wonderful array of mackintoshes, oilskins, sweaters and leather waistcoats, for it is pouring with rain outside.

The electric lamps of the skating rink were eclipsed by the powerful headlamps of the light cars. Every now and then an engine would be started up and the crisp note of the exhaust would reverberate through the great building.

It is a minute or two to eight o'clock, the official hour of the start. All is scurry and excitement. An individual in black oilskins rushes into the hall and shouts out, "Any volunteers for observers?" It was short notice to undertake the 24 hours run of about 433 miles, but the opportunity was not to be missed, and I handed in my name and was apportioned a seat in Mr Oates' Lagonda, not the luxurious coupé we are familiar with in the catalogue and advertisements, but a low, rakish, grey machine unprovided with hood or windscreen.

I noticed that our number was 13, and wondered whether we should ever

get home again. We crawled out of the skating rink into the dark wet night and were soon at the start, drawn up behind the Arden, and surrounded by crowds of people who, in spite of the rainstorms, had come out to see the start of the Oxford M.C.C.'s 24 hours trial.

Presently the Arden was given the word to go, and it was our turn next. We moved up to the timekeeper's table and the driver set his watch with the officials. Sixty seconds later we were scurrying along in the darkness on the main road, with the wind and rain beating in our faces. The first few miles were covered at speed in order that we might overtake the Arden (No. 12) and make use of its tail lamp as a guide, in which plan we were successful.

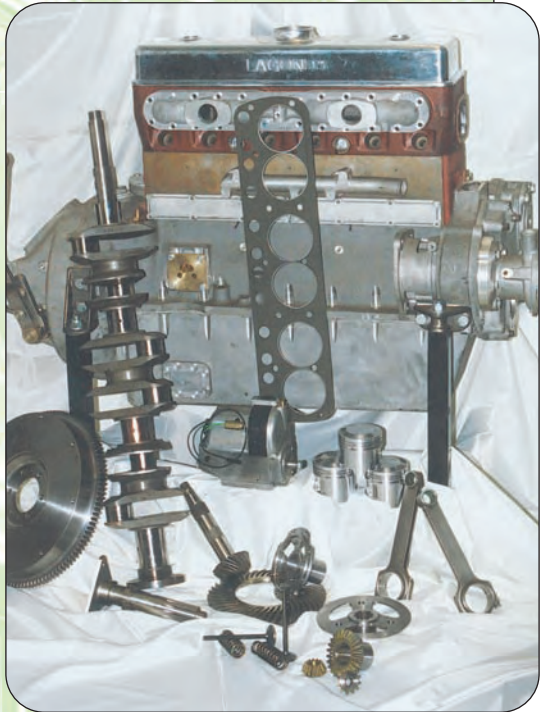
I knew the way as far as Bicester, but after that it seemed certain that we should lose ourselves, as the course was very sparsely arrowed. However, enthusiastic motorists, dim figures standing by lamps illuminating tiny black arrows were passed at intervals, and with a hurried "Thank you" these sentinels of the night were soon left far behind.

Stoney Stratford was the next point of interest, and as we went down the High Street, sending the mud shooting up on each side of our wheels, somebody shouted "Ten-mile limit!" - and it was well that we slowed down for a few hundred yards further on the

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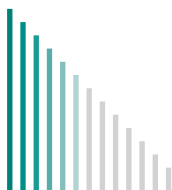
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gentlemen in blue were hard at work. Somehow we came to a standstill near one of them, who informed us that our tail lamp was out. We lit it and proceeded, only to find that it had gone out again a little further on, after which we, or rather the driver, continued to relight the lamp at intervals of every few miles. This was particularly annoying, as the little Lagonda was running splendidly.

It was in vain that more paraffin was tried and improvised shields erected to direct the air draughts away from the lamp. Eventually it was decided that I should have to hold it. It was still pouring with rain and we were well nigh frozen, and naturally with all our delays and tail lamp troubles we were somewhat behind time. Gradually we began to overhaul the competitors, as the Lagonda is quite a fast machine, and our headlights were good.

It was a picturesque sight indeed to see six or eight little red spots of flame crawling up and up in the black wall of darkness in front of us and they served to indicate quite well the general direction of the road. Sometimes the little procession would bear to the right and at others the left, and one by one they were left behind.

In the darkness we suddenly came upon a little crowd of competitors gathered round a signpost - looking for the way. Wet, flabby route cards were produced, a hurried consultation followed, and we were off again to the north and Grantham.

Had we thoughts of giving up, and did not the luring visions of a roaring fire and a comfortable bed tempt us to stop the night instead of going on ploughing through the sea of mud to York? Yes, indeed, we were sorely tempted, but after bodily refreshment we sallied forth again into the night. Ugh! it was cold.

Being an official observer, I was never allowed to leave my passenger unattended for a moment for fear he might suddenly take it into his head to dismantle the engine or fit a new gearbox whilst I was not looking, and so we went about like Siamese twins.

Further on the rear back tyre went down, and Mr Oates had to put on a spare wheel, which took him eight minutes. A roaring gale blowing with tremendous energy behind us caused the route card and official numbers to be blown out of the car and lost, and so it was more by luck than good judgement that we arrived at York in time. We had lost our way several times, but by reversing and looking at the signpost carefully on every occasion we managed to get back on the right road very quickly.

Consequently we were somewhat astonished to find we were the second arrivals in York, for we had imagined that we should be very late.

The others had apparently lost their way hopelessly. Breakfast was indeed appreciated, as it was the only meal we were to have during the 21 hours run. We decided to take in enough fuel to last us through the journey. Half-an-hour was spent in oiling up and replenishing the car and mending the punctured tyre, and then we were ready for the return journey.

What a contrast it was to the outward. The roaring gale had practically dried the roads, the sun came out and had it not been that we were still soaked from the night's drenching, the run would have been very pleasant. As it was, I managed to get 40 winks between York and Boroughbridge and woke up with a jerk to find Mr Stuart on the Morris-Oxford passing us. We drove in close company with him and Hugh Gibson, on the Clyno sidecar of 2,000 miles fame for many miles down those

long, uninteresting stretches of the Great North Road, the little Lagonda never missing for a single moment.

Grantham was reached again at about three o'clock and another stop was made for a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The rest of the run needs little description. and was perhaps the most

disagreeable part of all, for shortly after leaving Stamford we ran into a rain-storm of prodigious vehemence. The wind drove the rain right into our faces, and as it was combined with hail and we were forging our way against it at 30 miles an hour, the pain and discomfort can better be imagined than described.



*No 13 (Lagonda)
caught in a secret
time check by
timekeeper
Ebblewhite, who
is seen on the
left. Below, the
Arden, which
won a gold
medal, leaving a
control.*



The drivers of the Morris-Oxfords erected their hoods, but we journeyed on unprotected, longing for the little coupé body which would have made all the difference between pleasure and pain.

Eventually the setting sun broke through the rain clouds and by the time Newport Pagnel was reached we had

passed the storm area. Lamps were lit, and an hour-and-a-half later Lagonda (No13) ran into the finish at Oxford as sweetly and silently as she had run out at the start 24 hours earlier, and qualified for a well-earned gold medal.

McM



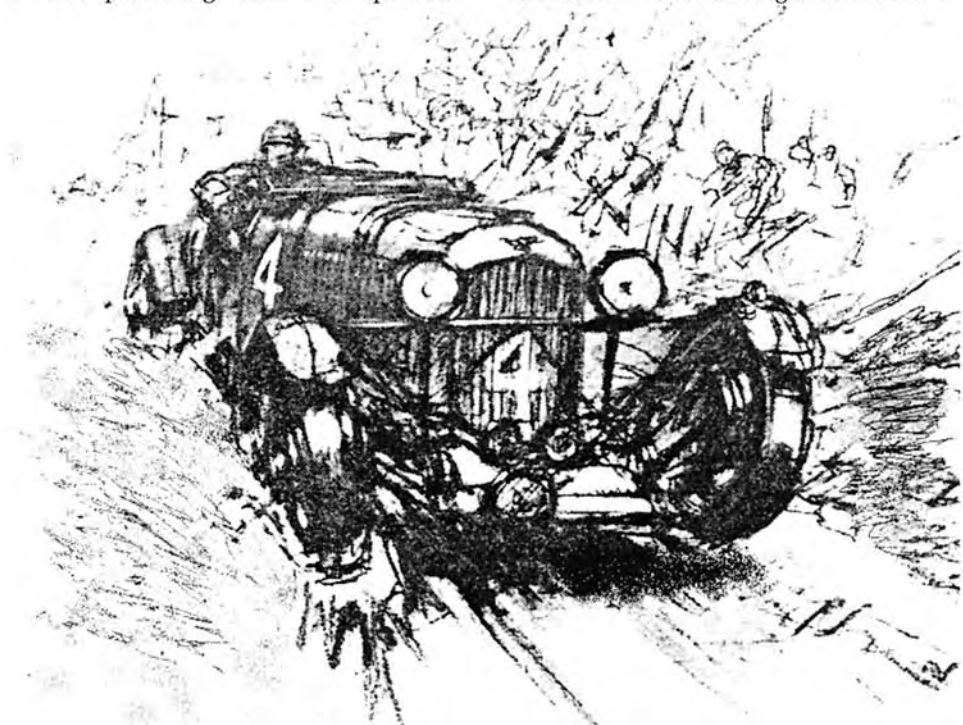
Leaving Grantham on the homeward journey. No 13 (Lagonda) breasting the hill in fine style.

THE GREAT LAGONDA RACE

Tim Wadsworth invites you all to a great day's racing

OULTON PARK on the 21st August 2010 will see, almost certainly, the largest number of Lagondas ever on a race track at any one time. With already 20 paid entries and another 10 promised this will be an occasion not to be missed. The field ranges from historic single seat Rapiers to standard 2 litres and of course includes V12 and LG45 Le Mans replicas together with four and a half litre Invictas. But this event is far more than just one race. The prior evening there will be a "Le Mans 75th Commemoration Dinner" at the nearby MacDonald Portal Hotel where we have a discounted club members rate. (Phone 0844 879 9082) Early on Saturday the competitors will be out practising, with our sponsors

Bishop Gray and Motor Wheel Services on hand to give any assistance needed. During the lunch interval all Lagondas present, including a number of specially invited "notable" Lagondas, will form up for a track parade. This will be followed by a bar-b-que lunch exclusively for members in the Foggarty Moss Centre overlooking the track. At the conclusion of an exciting afternoon's racing provided by the Aston Martin Owners Club, the winner of our own race will be presented with the original Le Mans trophy by Sally Harrison, daughter of John Hindmarsh, the winning driver in 1935. How can you not be there ? Enquiries to Tim Wadsworth 01666 860368 or e-mail tim@lagondahire.co.uk





Alec and Sylvia Downie, see "Letters" page 33.



A fine moody shot of the cars at Uppark last summer.



*New Zealand Tour: Richard Campbell at the top of Crown Terraces.
That winding road looks fun.*



Joe and David at Lanarch Castle.



Joe parks on the 45th Parallel.



The cars meet Alison Moores and her 2/4%.



Coffee stop.



The 3 litre waits for the ferry.

Four Lagondas visit New Zealand

Richard Campbell takes his Lagonda down under

FROM THE END of January to the first week in March this year, four Lagondas joined the 4th Bentley Drivers Club tour of New Zealand. The four were, Bill & Sue Spence's 1932 3 litre Carlton drop-head coupe, two 1934 M45s belonging to Joe & Deborah Harding and Richard (Cam) & Pippin Campbell, with David & Sally Brock-Jest taking their 1938 V-12 Le Mans Rep car. Having organised similar trips before and being blessed with almost non-stop sunshine it was a wonderful 3,500 mile trip, indeed if I fail to mention the weather you can assume it was bright warm sunshine as we had only three partly rainy days.

The cars were delivered to Southampton in early November and shipped direct to Christchurch in the South Island, where they arrived on Christmas Eve. Most of us flew in on 27th January, being driven straight from the airport to the nearby garage to pick up the cars and drive in to the hotel in the centre of the city. I have to admit that having owned my car for almost 48 years now; I was quite overwhelmed to be driving it on the other side of the world. We followed the directions and found our way to the city centre hotel with safe underground parking. That evening there was a get-together with drinks where we all began sizing up our fellow tourers, though we already knew that we covered an eclectic group of cars with eight W O Bentleys, seven Derby cars, four Mark VI or R types and five moderns. The format was that though the whole tour was organised, no-one had to complete it all and each was free to journey as they please and to use, or not use the planned hotels; a relaxed

attitude that helped set the whole tenor of the trip. We were warned not to use the cheap grade petrol as it could clog up spark plugs, but with the higher grade at 85 pence per litre, most of us were not complaining. We had the New Zealand turn right rule explained, where if you wish to turn left at a cross-roads and a car is coming from the opposite direction wishing to turn right across the traffic, it has right of way over you, though not over traffic going straight on at the cross roads. We were also advised very strongly to abide by the overall 100 kph speed limit, but with 61½ mph being a comfortable cruising speed for most of our cars, this did not cause much trouble, nor hold us up on these usually empty roads.

The first two days were based in Christchurch with trips to Akaroa and Ashburton suggested. We did both, the journey out of Christchurch introduced us to the relaxed approach to life taken by some New Zealanders, many were on bicycles, pedalling up the steep hill to Dyers Pass. As we neared the top, some were enjoying the free-wheel down again, including one gentleman wearing nothing but his cycle helmet and a broad grin! Ashburton is the home of Bruce McIlroy's, Bentley Motors. His beautifully kept and comprehensive workshop there fettles mainly Bentleys but also other similar cars. We were all invited to a barbecue and lunch party and joined by about 15 local cars as well, making it a happy afternoon in the sun.

The tour proper started Monday 1st February with a gathering in the quadrangle of Christ's College. It was the first day of term with many new pupils

there, mostly in striped blazers, into which they would soon grow, and some parents, slightly surprised at seeing all the cars. We were flagged away just after 9am and this was the only time anything like a convoy drove anywhere. The route took us west across flat well farmed grass land, up over Arthur's Pass across some dryer country then down to the coast above Hokitika and south through some shoulder testing twisting roads to Franz Joseph Glacier; a day's journey of some 250 miles. The hotel had glorious views of the glacier and with the next day free, people either took helicopter flights or walked to the glacier and also enjoyed boat trips on nearby lakes. Wednesday saw us continuing another 180 miles down the west coast through more forest, where the spectacular red-flowered Rata trees were still in bloom, to Haast Beach and then inland up both the river and the gorge to flat pasture and finally skirting Lake Wanaka which was mirror still with astounding reflections of the mountains behind it.

A single night was spent at Wanaka before continuing on to Queenstown. Some chose the longer flatter journey via Cromwell, but we decided to take the route past the oldest hotel in New Zealand at Cardrona and down the Crown Terraces, a real switchback of a road, reminiscent of an alpine pass, where we could get round the right hand hairpins, but had to swing wide on entry to the left hand ones lest we end up facing oncoming traffic. Three nights were spent at Queenstown where there was plenty to do with a day on a triple expansion steamer across Lake Wakatipu and an invitation to an afternoon barbecue at the house of a local BDC member and also the option of jet boat rides, paragliding trips, great walking paths and fine restaurants.

The second week saw us move on to Te Anau for two nights. The day there was taken up with a bus journey to

Milford Sound and a boat trip down the sound. This phenomenal scenery was looking its best with mixed sun and some light cloud giving it all perspective.

The next journey was back east to the Croydon Aircraft Renovation Company where many enjoyed flights in a Tiger Moth, though Bill Spence waited for a flight in a beautifully restored DH Rapide. That day we chose to divert south to the coast at Waewae bay and were rewarded with views of Hector's Dolphins. The evening saw us all in Invercargill where it was arranged for us to enjoy a special viewing of the film "The World's Fastest Indian". The actual motor-bike is now in the Hayes hardware store in the town together with others of Burt Munro's bikes and most people went to look at it the next day after viewing a museum in the town, the privately owned Richardson Truck museum with over 170 trucks mostly carefully restored and dating from 1911 to 2003. That afternoon, most went to The Bluff, not quite the southernmost point of South Island, but the southernmost accessible place, from where we could see Stewart Island.

The next day was east along the south coast to Dunedin, passing through both grazing land and forested country. Several diversions were possible, some of which involved unmade roads of varying smoothness, and people visited Curio Bay to see yellow eyed penguins and petrified wood, also Nugget Point to see Royal Spoonbills and seals. That evening we were all taken to dinner at Larnach Castle, an impressive building on the Otago Peninsular with a somewhat chequered history. It was a fine night and a good meal and the Hardings and Brock-Jests stayed that night at the castle while the rest of us were bussed back to Dunedin.

Friday 12th was booked as a train journey up the Taieri Gorge railway, whilst it was a massive feat of

engineering to build this 100 years ago and we saw great views of the gorge, the commentary was inaudible and most of those who made the journey agreed that those who spent the day exploring the scenery of the Otago Peninsular made the better decision. Thus on Saturday some stayed to explore Otago and enjoyed it, however they also got rained on mid-morning. We chose to leave fairly early and drive the 160 miles to Omarama where I had arranged to fly a glider during the afternoon.

The Hardings and Brock-Jests took a more northern route going to Timaru to see a motor race meeting. Unfortunately Joe did not make it as drawing away from a traffic light, he lost all drive. It turned out he had been driving with only about 20% of one half shaft transmitting power for many years and it chose that afternoon to let go totally. They were fortunately quite near Ashburton and the car was taken to Bruce McIlroy's garage for investigation and repairs. The mechanics turned out on Sunday and soon solved the problem with Joe's able help, so he was only delayed by about a day.

That Sunday, St. Valentines day, we drove almost 300 miles north past Mount Cook and travelling inland of Christchurch and on to Hanmer Springs, a spa town in the mountains, which enabled Monday to be spent walking in the hills nearby. Moving on past Murchison to Nelson, we had had the pleasure of gloriously varied scenery through the mountains, over rivers and past more forests on the journey. On Wednesday all cars were invited for coffee to the Saunders' house above Split Apple Rock and another very twisting route took us up to this perfectly situated house with stunning views across the bay to Nelson. He is a BDC member who lives part in UK and partly in NZ and they offered us great hospitality and had also arranged for a friend who runs a

helicopter to offer discounted trips up the scenic Abel Tasman National Park coast. After this some went over the Takaka pass to Pupu Springs which is said to have the largest and purest fresh water spring in the world. We visited a farming friend nearby for lunch and a long agricultural chat.

A short journey from Nelson to Blenheim was planned for Thursday and as this passes Havelock, where Alison Moores lives, Lagondas had arranged to meet en route. The day started dry but grey, and first we visited the World of Wearable Art museum which has both motor cars and a fashion collection. Thus the men went to one section and the ladies the other. Then, as we climbed up through the Bryant Mountains following a 1924 3 litre Bentley, great exhaust note if a little slower than our car, it started to rain and as we drew up at the arranged meeting place, Pelorus Bridge, it was raining solidly. Alison had just got there and soon we were joined by the other three Lagondas. We sat and talked over coffee, but it was clear that this was not the perfect place for lunch and after a while we decided that we had to move on.

In the pouring rain, Alison led the way, followed by the V-12, then us and finally Bill's 3 litre. Alison's car with its stretched chassis and Meadows motor in a 2 litre tourer body travels quite fast and an exhilarating chase took us quickly to Havelock, which is the centre of the Green Lipped Mussel farming industry of New Zealand. Joe & Deborah went straight on to the Otago Aviation Museum while the rest of us stopped for a gentle mussel lunch. By the time this was eaten the rain had largely stopped and we had been joined by the 1928 4½ Bentley of Mike & Mandy Knowles. Alison turned off home shortly and then we, the V-12 and the Bentley had a very happy journey through the Marlborough wine country to Blenheim at 61½mph!

On Friday, Brock-Jests and Hardings set off for the North Island to get to Napier earlier than the rest of us so they would be sure to be there for the Art Deco festivities which involve many New Zealand cars of the 1920s and 30s together with picnics and pub crawls, sorry, actually peripatetic dinners with one course at each of several restaurants. With the Spences and Alison, we joined the planned cruise to mussel farms in the Marlborough Sounds. The weather had reverted to its standard hot sunny state and a great relaxing day was enjoyed.

Saturday 20th February was the day we had to say farewell to South Island, taking the 10am ferry from Picton to Wellington. This ferry travels up the Queen Charlotte Sound and out through the Tory Channel past simply stunning scenery looking its best in the bright sun. The Cook straight was windy, but we were safely in to Wellington as planned just after 1.30pm. We then followed the west coast road from Wellington, through Waikanae, Waikawa, Waitarere, Whangaehu to Wanganui, across largely flat land with grazing and crops; quite a lot of barley looking ready to combine and also maize growing well. It was, however a very windy day and travelling in to it was very buffeting, so we arrived at Wanganui quite exhausted. We stopped briefly to visit a cousin and Bill Spence saw an aunt, though on arrival at the hotel he found his car had split one wheel rim. However with 2 spares he was able to continue safely.

We all made it to a river trip for dinner on the paddle steamer Waimarie moored on the Wanganui River. The boat is flat bottomed, built in London in 1899 and shipped out to NZ in pieces. The paddles have a hinged motion from an eccentric outside the main propulsion shaft. They enter the water almost vertically and remain so through their arc in the water, thus being much more

efficient than a fixed paddle seen on American steamers and enabling a much smaller wheel to be used, but with no screw to push water over the rudder it is slower to react and less steady on the helm, as I learned when taking the wheel for a spell. Nonetheless, a jolly evening was enjoyed, enlivened by free wine.

Sunday was the big day at Napier and those already there had a great party. The rest of us had an equally fascinating journey across North Island, pausing to visit the Waiouru Army Museum which features a succinct series of explanations of New Zealand's role in all conflicts from the Maori wars of 1860s to Boer War, WW1, WW2 with both the western conflict including the desert war in North Africa and the Pacific front clearly explained, then on to the Malayan fighting of 1950s and up to their current involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. From there, in hot sun we crossed a pass known as "Gentle Annie" across the Three Kings Range and the Kaweka Forest Park, a lot of unmade up road which is the process of being tarred and that meant that quite long stretches were only made of the base layer which comprised 4 to 6 inch stone. It shook the car somewhat, but we made it OK.

Once in Napier we found two New Zealand Lagondas in the hotel Car Park, an LG45 and a Rapier, together with many other pre war cars parked or travelling around the town. The following day was free in Napier and we saw many of the local cars leaving. We then visited one of the few Gannett colonies sited on a mainland at Cape Kidnappers. Unfortunately we had not realised that a collective Lagonda photo had been arranged together with Bill Inglis' 1936 LG45 and, with the timing of tides, we were back too late to be part of this gathering.

From Napier we had a gentle 100 mile run across the Maungaharuru and



On Gentle Annie.



Bill Inglis joins the group for a picture.



The cars form up at the Waitangi Treaty grounds.



At rest at Taipa Bay.

Ahimanawa ranges to Taupo, a tourist town on the shores of the largest fresh water lake in Australasia and the beginning of the areas of geothermal activity. The water is also harnessed for hydro electricity generation and Wednesday was spent exploring this region. Thursday started grey, we walked the so-called "Craters of the Moon" a valley now steaming with many sources of heat, but which only began in the 1950s when excavations nearby for the first geothermal power station were pushed down 2km into the ground. As we left it began to rain and this was our wettest day, but with a short 50 mile journey to Rotorua and more walking in geothermal valleys to explore, we continued without extracting all our luggage which is necessary before we can put up our hood. It is as they say about Rotorua, you smell the rotten eggs before you get there, even in the rain. We were also advised to coat all nickel and copper parts of the car with WD40 to resist discolouration. After a free day at Rotorua, we then travelled 150 miles north along the lesser route 27 avoiding large towns and arriving just north of Auckland at Takapuna for a one night stop, then on north another 150 miles to the Bay of Islands where we stayed at Paihia, beside the Waitangi Treaty Grounds where the treaty between the Maori and the British Crown was signed in 1840. It was the day after the Chilean earthquake and warnings were sounded about a possible tsunami, so when at 3:30am the following morning a long siren sounded across the bay, several people got up fearing the worst and were even more put off by the fact that it was a low spring tide. Nothing seemed to happen, though some said there had been a one metre surge at 11am earlier. By now we had been travelling over 4 weeks and we welcomed the 3-day stay to explore the scenery and sailing at the

bay, lunch at Russell and a walk to the top of Signal Hill which was organised on the first day. With the full moon and clear skies, walking around the bay after dinner was a magical experience.

Wednesday 3rd March saw us continue north about 50 miles to Taipa Bay, but with diversions to the coast or round a scenic route, most people travelled somewhat further. This hotel was again right on the beach at Doubtless Bay, so called after a remark of Captain Cook in 1776. There is quite a big sand bar across the entrance to the bay with navigable channels at either end, making it look from seaward as though it could be two inlets; when Capt Cook sailed in he saw the single sweep of the land and commented, "Doubtless, this is a bay." The name stuck and it was a beautiful place for a walk in the golden evening sun.. Thursday saw most of us taking a bus trip up the remaining spur of New Zealand to Cape Reinga, we saw the bogs from which they reclaim the enormous old Kauri trees, buried some 45,000 years ago and are made into everything from furniture to butter dishes. The gum from these trees used to be dug up and used for shellac, so may be in some Lagonda magnetos. Also, on the eastern shores, the whitest silica sand which until recently was exported around the world as a pure source of the mineral.

We walked out to the lighthouse from where we could see the colour change in the sea where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea. From there it had to be south again and we visited the Giant sand dunes with many people body boarding down these vast dunes and then a bus journey down the 90 Mile Beach, actually a misnomer as it comprises two beaches, one of 64 miles and another of 26. So many people drive down this beach that it is classified as a road to give the police control over speeding, though not everyone does this

and we passed one hire car stuck in the sand.

That evening we were invited to the Matthews Museum and kindly entertained to dinner by the New Zealand VCC. Friday then saw us drive 270 miles back to Auckland down the western side of the top of North Island across the Rawene car ferry and through the existing and now protected Kauri forest where 2000 year old trees abound. This meant we entered Auckland from the west sensibly avoiding the snarl up on the city bridge which had overheated a number of cars on the way north. A central hotel was arranged with secure car parking.

There remained but one day and a visit by ferry and bus to Waiheke Island to tour wineries followed by the farewell dinner and dancing until after Midnight. Thanks and speeches were briefly made

and Bill Spence had arranged engraved frames with Lagonda pictures to be presented to both Cedric Cook, the UK organiser and Frank Renwick who had masterminded the New Zealand end, including all the work to get our cars into the country registering them and acquiring Warranties of Fitness, their MOT equivalent. Their work was invaluable and helped to make this the easiest and most enjoyable of tours. Sunday morning the cars were driven out to the shippers to be put in containers for the return journey from Auckland to Southampton.

I hope I have pictured a busy but relaxed five and a half weeks in glorious weather surrounded by fantastic and varied scenery, in a country with a deep appreciation of old cars where the roads are largely empty and driving is great pleasure. Try it, it is not as difficult as you might think!



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The Brock-Jests with full weather protection.



Let us not forget the ladies: Deborah, Sally, Pippin and Sue, still smiling.

Lagonda M45 Servicing

Michael Drakeford gets down and dirty

Weekly

Oil carburettor linkages

Check tyre pressures at 34lbs

Top up Carburettors with 3 in 1 oil

500 Miles

Grease 4 steering connections, 2 on track rod and 2 on drag link

Grease 4 steering pivot connections 2 at each front wheel

Turn both water pump greasers half a turn (Water resistant grease)

Check oil level in engine

Check water level and top up with antifreeze

Check battery levels and grease terminals with vaseline

1,000 miles, or 6 months whichever is the earlier

Change engine oil

2,000 Miles or annually

Grease both ends of propellor shaft (modern type) or oil, cone type

Oil 8 spring gaiters (not grease)

Grease front shackles (if fitted)

Oil can for : pedal shaft bearings

splined shaft at front end of gearbox

steering rods joints

brake servo links

Check oil levels in: gearbox (SAE 90, not hypoid) rear axle (SAE 140)

Check level of oil in steering box (SAE 140)

Magneto:

3 drops of 3 in 1 oil into driving end

5 drops of 3 in 1 oil into the

distributor end

contact breaker, check gap at 0.012 ins

Every 3,000 miles:

1 drop of oil on contact lever bearing pin and 2 drops on the cam

lubricating pad

clean inside of distributor section with petrol soaked cloth

Distributor :

Clean inside with clean cloth soaked in petrol

Oil, 2 drops in oiler every 1,000 miles smear cam with vaseline when dry or every 3,000 miles

check gap at 0.012-16ins

Check sparking plugs for 0.019ins gap and clean or replace

Brakes:

Remove drums and inspect shoes for wear and clean out dust

Clutch :

Check for free movement and adjust grease (2) oil linkages including swinging arm pivot of the clutch stop and the oil filler at bottom

Springs:

Check for tightness of U bolts

5,000 Miles

Clean oil strainers in engine (2)

Grease front brake camshafts (2 on each front wheel)

Grease rear brake camshafts (1 on each rear wheel)

Grease rear hubs (removing plugs)

Grease cross-shaft bearings

(2 per side)

Replace grease in front hubs (high melting point lithium based grease)

Dynamo:

Check and clean bushes and commutator.

Starter motor:

Check and clean bushes and commutator.

Clean carburettor float chambers and filters

Clean petrol filters at petrol pump (2)

This has been prepared by Michael Drakeford and endorsed by David Hine. Any volunteers to prepare similar charts for the other models in the range?

"Passion for Older Cars"

by **Brian Ricketts** ISBN 978-0-9557441

Ken Painter reviews an interesting autobiography

BRIAN IS A LONG-STANDING member of the Lagonda Club and has written the story of his life-long enthusiasm for owning and restoring cars of many marques, even managing to squeeze in some autobiographical details as well!

His first car was a 1928 Morris Cowley tourer, for which he paid the princely sum of £13. This was kept for just three months before it was sold for the original purchase price and eventually replaced by a 1932 Cowley saloon. This, in turn, was replaced by an SS II coupe after a year or two. Although they are most attractive cars, the Standard Nine engine that powered them was never a big performer and no doubt its lethargy influenced the next choice, a Rover 16. This like many before and after it, was only kept for a short time and was replaced by a Morris Minor, which served for several years.

A pattern that will be only too familiar to many of our members was emerging. Brian would buy a car needing work to bring it up to a decent standard, undertake as much of the work himself as he could and farming out the tasks he was unable to manage. The car would then either be sold fairly quickly, or would be kept and used until yet another challenge would be taken on. As his skills and confidence developed the range of tasks he felt confident to undertake increased accordingly.

The range of marques and models passing through his hands is fascinating. Not just Lagondas, although they are well represented, but Alvis; Aston Martin; Austin; Bentley; Borgward; Fiat; Humber; Jaguar; M.G.; Renault; Rolls Royce, from the 20 HP model to the Silver Spirit, Standard; Sunbeam Talbot;

Triumph and Vauxhall all feature.

Brian is refreshingly honest about the mistakes he has made during his exploits, but I can personally admit to turning down one of the more challenging restoration projects he completed successfully because I simply regarded it as too great a challenge. He frequently brings into the story the cars owned by his friends and neighbours, often showing how they influenced his choices or taught him new skills and the final chapter of the book is a series of brief and amusing or instructive snippets of his experiences.

Are there any criticisms? A few very minor ones. The photographs vary greatly in quality, since many are early colour pictures, which have never been noted for their colour fastness. A few very minor typographic errors have been missed, but probably no more than you will find in a single copy of this magazine... The esoteric art of double de-clutching is described as double-d-clutching, which irritates, especially as the process is then described with admirable clarity. This is no highly technical account of a series of heroic rebuilds, but it describes one member's love of the sort of cars we all admire, told simply and without any false pride. Buy it!

The book has been published privately and is available directly from Brian at his home address, which appears below. It costs £15 per copy, including postage and packing. Send your cheque to:

Brian Ricketts,
'The Cottage',
9 Bassett Crescent East,
Bassett, Southampton, SO17 1PF.

Letters

Dear Ken,

In the current magazine on page 32 you ask "Who, what, when, where?" I am afraid I can only answer one part of your questions with any certainty, "What". The car is the 1936 Lagonda LG45 Saloon, Freestone and Webb "Brougham Saloon" or colloquially "the razor-edge saloon", which is currently in regular use and resides with us.

Eric Barret bought the car while in Shanghai on the 8th March 1950 and took it to Hong Kong in 1952, visiting England in 1956, returning to Hong Kong in 1957 and then, in 1960, Barrett and the car went to Shingawa, Japan; in 1962 they once again returned to Hong Kong. From my Knowledge of Hong Kong and Shanghai I think the picture was taken in Hong Kong and because I can't see the additional bonnet vents that were fitted in 1957, in order to improve engine cooling. I think therefore the photograph is dated 1952 - 56.

Brougham, is just two miles outside Penrith and lies in the former historic county of Westmorland. A Roman fort originally occupied the site of the current Brougham Castle, known as the "Windsor of the North". Freestone and Webb had a number of Brougham saloons at the 1936 Motor Show.

Kindest regards

Stephen Matthews

Henry Peter Brougham was born in Edinburgh of English parents on 19th September 1778. He became a Scottish

Advocate and later an English Barrister. He sat in the House of Commons from 1810 to 1812 and again from 1816 to 1839. He was one of the leading orators of his day, both at the bar and in Parliament. He defended Queen Caroline and advocated legal and other reforms. In 1836 he was made Lord Chancellor and granted a peerage. He left office in 1835 and died on May 7th 1868,

His extraordinary energy drove the reforms, such as the establishment of the Judicial Committee and the Central Criminal Court, as well as promoting schemes for educating the people. The motoring world owes the invention of the Brougham body to him. Originally, a Brougham was a closed four wheeled carriage, drawn by two horses and seating four persons inside, with the driver being on a box seat outside. A Doctor's Brougham had only two seats inside.

As you will now all know. Michael Drakeford had been given a copy of the photograph by Rivers Fletcher, the man in the photograph and Arnold revealed all in the April Newsletter. My copy came from a disc sent to me by our Chairman, Jonathan Oppenheimer with no details of the car or the people. Since the car's history was described in great detail in a fairly recent magazine I fully expected a flood of responses to the easy part of the question I posed. I should have known better...

K.P.P.

Dear Ken,

Further to my recent letter (*printed above, K.P.P.*) I enclose a photograph of Ales and Sylvia Downie, Alec proudly wearing his Lagonda tie, outside their beautiful home, with the "Brougham Saloon", on the 5th April.

On this day Alec was celebrating his 90th birthday and he and Sylvia were about to depart to a local restaurant to meet family and friends for a terrific lunch. I can say that the celebration was a great success, with much laughter and hilarity, seasoned with Lagonda memories and reminiscences - a great

day, in wonderful company and a fabulous car.

I am sure members would wish to know that just after celebrating his birthday Alec was seen underneath his Lagonda 2 litre High Chassis, fettling it for the coming summer. I couldn't help wondering how many other 90 year olds have been working on their cars recently? A fantastic rôle model for all of us!

Best wishes

Stephen

See page 17 for the picture. K.P.P.



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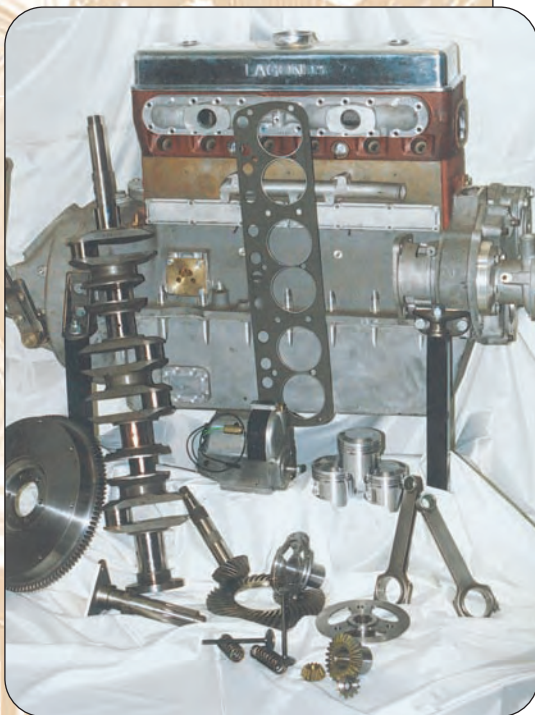
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